



# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

VOL. VIII

APRIL, 1922

NO. 2

## MUSIC AND THE GRAND STYLE

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IT was Matthew Arnold who searched carefully for a definition of what a well-known critic has called "that mysterious entity," the Grand Style. Arnold's definition, evidently framed with caution, is in itself quite enough to convince us of the difficulty of forming a statement of what constitutes the Grand Style; a statement that is at once accurate and comprehensive—close enough to the fact to be of service, and wide enough in its phrase to apply to the works which the literary man will agree should come under the heading. "The Grand Style," wrote Arnold, "arises in poetry when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or severity a serious subject." Homer, Dante, and Milton—these are the men to whom Arnold allowed the Grand Style. This is interesting, no doubt, but someone is sure to say, and there is justification for the remark, that we need definitions of definitions. Cannot we brush away misunderstanding by using the simplest terms? What, in any case, is style? "Style, the Latin name for a pen," says Professor Raleigh, "has come to designate the art that handles, with ever fresh vitality and wary alacrity, the fluid elements of speech." More briefly, it is elsewhere described as the characteristic or peculiar mode of expression and execution; and, again, as "the man himself," the revelation of personality. When we put pen to paper, we advertise ourselves. Our virtues and defects are there for all the world to read. As the Burtonian maxim has it, "our style bewrays us," and it may be remembered that Pater, in discussing Flaubert's concern for "the word's adjustment to its meaning," stipulates that "the first condition of this must be, of course, to know yourself, to have ascertained your own sense exactly."

Arnold's definition possesses a significance that is poetical only. Nevertheless, it supplies us with a starting point, inasmuch as we can make a slight variation upon it, and then see how the result applies to music. This manner of testing has obvious dangers. The original was framed to meet the poetical case. We make only the changes which the name of another art necessitates. May it not be that the statement, as it appears in its second form, proves unsuitable for our purpose; that we have to alter the method of testing? When applying the variation of Arnold's words to the sister muse, we must, consequently, keep in mind that we do so merely in order to come to a closer understanding of what music written in the Grand Style consists. Here, then, we have the Arnoldian dictum as it reads adapted for the present occasion. "The Grand Style arises in music when a noble nature, musically gifted, treats with simplicity or severity a serious subject." Does that satisfy you? Quite candidly, I confess that it does not satisfy me. "Der Ring des Nibelungen," I consider, possesses the Grand Style. Can we say that the theme is treated with simplicity or severity, relative as those terms necessarily are? Similarly, I consider that "Die Meistersinger" possesses in abundance the proper qualities. Can we call the subject serious? There yet remains the problem of the noble nature, a condition that would rule out any work by Lulli, even were the remaining conditions fulfilled. In music, I claim a greater latitude than this modification of Arnold's words permits, and, it seems to me, at least, that we have a tolerably accurate idea of the Grand Style as exhibited in that art if we say that it is in evidence when the music is big, not only, or even necessarily, in its externals, but in its essential factors and its emotional significance. Pater was right when he affirmed that "as a quality of style, soul is a fact." The matter, needless to say, is hedged round with great difficulties, however well-disposed and cunning we are in grappling with them. And the difficulties themselves are not lessened by being of a subjective nature. To my thinking, if the Grand Style does not imply the presence of the sublime, it certainly implies something very akin to it. When we are confronted with it, we feel that the work reaches the heights, like a spiritual Matterhorn, and carries us definitely to the rare and elevated places.

Touching this question, one is inclined to think that more satisfaction to ourselves can be derived from a contact with music than from theoretical disputations, however apt. For in our day-to-day experience we are brought face to face with compositions of all periods and styles, and it is, naturally, in the course of these



artistic excursions that we encounter the examples which we credit with the needful condition, and can say to ourselves, "that, at any rate, is in the Grand Style." It will be just those excursions that will set us thinking, and nurse a desire to settle the problem to our satisfaction. Who, then, are the composers we are willing to place in the exalted position that Arnold allowed to Homer, Dante, and Milton? Who are the world-singers, singers not thrown into the light of publicity because of a vogue or a passing fad, but who hold their courses like great ships upon the deep sea, whatever the state of the tides of fashion?

Most people, I am sure, will feel that Bach is one of the musicians who meet the demands we must make—Bach, who so often sang in a strong and joyful voice for the entire universe. You may say that Bach has his parochial aspect, which is true. Steep yourself in the story of his life, turn over the pages of the historian, and you will find that you have been made to see the Lutheran Germany of his day. This is not to deny the greater aspect of Bach. Few students of Shakespeare are without intimate knowledge of the "spacious days" of Queen Elizabeth. To learn that Shakespeare walked the streets of London, had his plays produced at the Globe Theatre, and frequented the Mermaid Tavern is not to blot out the world-figure. In his greater moments, and they are many, Bach is a cosmic singer, taking not a corner or a province for his own, but the whole, wide world. If the sense of "o'er-topping" be a criterion, then Bach cannot justly be denied his place; if there be a time for employing the oft-abused adjective "consummate," it is, surely, when speaking of such a thing as the Sanctus from the Mass in B minor. This sense of the "bigness" of the man is strengthened when we think of many of his contemporaries, who have become mere names. If Bach had not been more than a weaver of parts, and a dexterous juggler using counter-point instead of hats and rabbits, he would have been placed in the museum beside the mummies of the Pharaohs long ago. Bach himself is a world in which the modern musician, for all the later accomplishment, can wander to his advantage, breathing in the air of purity and sanity, quenching his thirst at innumerable springs. For here there is greatness not only in "filling the mould," but in maintaining the dignity of thought and holding the interest by the sheer weight and authority of his genius. The reader will not look for a closer enquiry into the case of Bach; because, in the first place, Bach has his position secure by a consent that is all but universal; and because, in the second, it is known to all serious musicians that Bach's music is strong, deep, and vigorous, flowing

steady and true like a great river, and not a thing of erratic bubbles and splashes, however beautiful.

In Beethoven, likewise, the Grand Style is present. Despite the verdict of hasty youth, for whom the oft-repeated sonatas have grown stale, there is something here that voices the emotions of humanity in a language worthy of that noble task; something, in a word, of that "bigness" to which reference has already been made. The "Eroica," the C minor, and the Choral, these symphonies do not seem to us denominational. Than the Choral it would be difficult to mention a work more universal in its scope, appeal, and intention. In its higher manifestations, at least, the music of Beethoven, like the work of some other great men, while deeply personal, soars out of time and place. Certain it is that we have in him a noble nature, musically gifted, treating with simplicity—how much Beethoven could make out of a scale, or a few repeated notes!—a serious subject. More might be said of Beethoven than this, however; something of his spaciousness, something of his music's "alliance to great ends," for example. But there is no need to do more than make the briefest allusion to those compositions that are his authentic passports to the select circle. There can be little hesitation concerning the man when we name some of the products of his genius. The "Egmont," "Coriolan" and "Leonora No. 3" overtures are rendered difficult of appraisal by reason of their frequent programme appearances. Yet, strenuously wrought as they are to-day, we acknowledge them to be sealed with the seal of a great man, and stamped with the stamp of his personality. Some will wish to add the "Pathétique," or "Waldstein," or "Appassionata," or "Hammerclavier" sonata, perhaps all of them, according to their disposition. Truly, no works could be further removed from the tinkling tunes heard at one time so often in Viennese salons; their natural element is the world with its vast horizon. One is struck, not by their restrictions, but by their scope, their search for, and finding of, opportunities that allow, and sanction, the deeper utterance. It was but natural that in his early works the style and manner of the Eighteenth Century should weigh with Beethoven. The shadows of Haydn and Mozart lay across his path. Even a genius has to make a beginning somewhere. No such fact can banish Beethoven from the inner group. Either the "Eroica" is an epic page, or it is nothing, and the world stands on its head. True, the apprentice is aware that no man would now score an heroic symphony as Beethoven scored his. We must not be misled by contemplating the subsequent advance in orchestration. Let us put our finger upon

that which counts. Is there any man who exhibited in greater degree the faculty of raising a scale, a phrase, or a figure, unimportant and unimpressive if placed on neutral ground, to the full heights of significance; is there any who could from the simplest ingredients produce a more extraordinary richness? It is, perhaps, in this that Beethoven, as a master of the Grand Style, appears most clearly. Analyse some of his marvellous passages, and you will say that a thing, not dissimilar, has been written by another man in another place. Still, paradoxical as it may appear, the other man's effect is not like Beethoven's. It is not that Beethoven possessed a copyright in the realm of emotional expression, save that conferred upon him by his genius. The diatonic theme, the voice of the oboe, the stroke on the timpani were at the service of all. The difference between Beethoven and that other less fortunate personage must be accounted for by the relationship which the former establishes, by the grip he has over his theme, by the inherent strength that gives him power to battle with the circumstance.

It is Pater, I think, who makes a subtle distinction between good and great art. To ask more of a work of art than that it should be in harmony with itself is to ask too much. One may be permitted to say, however, that the recognition of this is not incompatible with the recognition of a distinction between the good and the great, the greatness, in music, depending upon the presence of something that adds to, rises out of, or transcends the harmonious condition just mentioned. The good acknowledges and abides by its own law; it preserves consistency within itself. The great does all this and, in addition, communicates to us something that at once impresses us. We are conscious that an added richness and power *are* present, that they have a bearing upon the quality, effect, and status of the work. We may feel what we cannot describe or define. It is genius working with its pen, and the word "magic" may be pardoned those who call upon it when they have discovered a peak in Darien, or when a new planet swims into their ken. It is personality revealed upon the page; or, to express it otherwise, it is style—"the man himself." In a supreme degree, Beethoven has the gift of thus impressing us. Again and again, we observe how he works, abiding his time, and bringing forth the full flower of his thought in its due season. All the emotions are sounded on his lyre. He bends to some confidential confession; he sings a hymn of humanity. From chaos and darkness, he brings order and light. In him we discern that "agitated soul" which the Aristotelian

view postulates as an essential to the attainment of the grand or superior.

I said that I claimed a greater latitude in music than Arnold countenanced in poetry. Despite this, I do not find many men to whom I can credit the Grand Style. This is a personal matter, and I may be wrong. To me it seems that, after Beethoven, Wagner is preëminently the man who claims attention. Coming to Wagner we come to one about whom there is no shadow of doubt whatever. If Wagner be not a master of the Grand Style, no one is. If Wagner did not take the universe in his arms, no other musician assumed that burden. Outwardly the music-dramas of Wagner are grand in that they are spread upon an enormous canvas, and that with a stroke of the brush the composer could cause many others to look very small. For it is in the presence of the giant that the dwarf seems most dwarfish. Not alone in sheer length and architectural splendour does Wagner substantiate his claim to the title of master in this regard. The style of his music reinforces that claim, and reinforces it beyond cavil. No man can hear "*Der Ring des Nibelungen*," "*Tristan und Isolde*," and "*Die Meistersinger*" without feeling that he is in touch with one on whom the Grand Style sat unconstrainedly and naturally. Rhetorical Wagner most certainly was; splendidly and opulently rhetorical. In the face of this rhetoric the person who rejects rhetoric as such gives himself some trouble to justify his attitude. The mature Wagner marched on the heights, and if we want to realise how fully and gloriously he employed the Grand Style we have but to compare his work with that surrounding it. Put the love-music of "*Tristan und Isolde*" against the love-music of the average opera, put the purple patches, (if the phrase be allowed), against the purple patches of others, and you see at once the striking difference. There is nothing small or mean, nothing insignificant or compromising, in the "*Liebested*" or "*Wotan's Abschied*," while practically the whole of "*Götterdämmerung*" touches the peaks of epic grandeur. This ability to grasp the large thing and express it in appropriate accents did not banish the ability to come to close quarters, to sound a tender note, to breathe a quiet charm, or attain the intimate. With Wagner, the creator of *Eva* as well as of *Brünnhilde*, the greater included the less, which it does not always do in art. The episode of the Rhine-maidens in Act III of "*Götterdämmerung*," and the first act of "*Die Walküre*," are proof conclusive. Like Shakespeare, Wagner could descend from his pedestal; and, as in the case of Shakespeare, there was nothing shameful in the movement. It is a truth that

Wagner held his style easily. He showed an extraordinary freedom, dropping the larger and more imposing to take up the smaller and more delicate, without surrendering one jot or tittle in the matter of quality. Few things are more remarkable than the manner in which Wagner revealed his mastery in this connection. It has been pointed out how his four great works differ in instrumentation; how, again, "Die Meistersinger" is primarily contrapuntal, "Parsifal" primarily harmonic; how "Tristan und Isolde" is chromatic, while "Siegfried" wears a colour that is almost Mozartian. There is some truth in this. Wagner worked from within, throwing his enormous power of concentration upon the essentials. But, contrapuntal or not, he is always Wagner. As an example of the reliability of his instinct, one may refer to the first act of "Die Walküre." For the greater part he determinedly holds to a comparative simplicity in the orchestra. The scene between Siegmund and Sieglinde could not further be reduced. One may even say this is applicable up to the point where Sieglinde sings, "Sieg-mund, so nenn' ich dich." The mention of that name, the drawing of the sword from the tree, the mutual recognition of Siegmund and Sieglinde—these events do not find Wagner lacking. He takes the orchestra and whips it up, infusing into it a new activity and vitality, imparting to it a tightness and an expressiveness not before touched in this act. One need not approach the subtleties in order to perceive that the effect got when the curtain falls has been obtained by the way in which the music rises upon itself, so to speak, and attains a higher altitude.

Wagner is leisurely, of that there can be no doubt, and this leisureliness, which would be insufferable in a small man, finds wide acceptance, as, to put it plainly, the stuff is so good. It must be emphasised that haste and fussiness are the arch-enemies of sublimity. But in Wagner's case we find more to say of his leisureliness than that. A music-drama which takes four hours for its performance is not of itself any proof of precocity. It may, indeed, proclaim the industry of the composer; it is as likely to advertise his defects. What ought to be our task here is to demonstrate that while Wagner lets his drama play itself out before us with a kind of sovereign majesty, he does not fill the hour by sacrificing the moment. A four-hour drama could be compounded of ingredients which bear no, or little, relationship one to another; of patches which are joined by the most obvious threads. It would be a bad drama. The length of Wagner's works must always be viewed in the light of their content. The length of any musical production is fixed by the amount of interest it holds, not by the

number of moments it occupies for its performance. Wagner sets his pace; he allows himself plenty of room for his metamorphosis of themes; he believes in a policy of saturation. It is a question whether his way of developing his themes could be satisfactorily carried on within narrower limits; it is a question whether a music-drama of the dimensions of, say, "Tristan und Isolde" could be shouldered by one who viewed music perpendicularly. Wagner is rich in dynamic power. His music progresses, reaching out with strong arms. Even his most atmospheric pages are not static, as that word is now understood. His method, as a method, makes enormous demands upon a composer, demands which only a Wagner can ever hope fully to satisfy. After hours of music which must be counted among the most glorious in existence, he achieves the "Liebestod," a priceless jewel. The leisureliness of Wagner did not result in looseness or diffuseness. I can think of few men who, having penned as many notes, so seldom disappoint us. Such things ought to be borne in mind, though not to the exclusion of the one central fact that must be sent home; namely, that Wagner's title to master of the Grand Style resides in the nature of his music. His "bigness" is not the bigness of one who uses six trumpets in place of two, who says *fortissimo* what another says *forte*, who imposes himself upon us by empty gestures and high-sounding adjectives. It is the "bigness" of one whose artistic stature is equal to the bigness of his theme; of one who, at a given moment, meets the exigencies of the situation completely, generously, and easily; of one who, alike in his thought and his manner of communicating it, towers towards the stars, and takes all things within his embrace. In a word, his music is big by virtue of its "alliance to great ends."

Liszt is difficult to deal with, not alone on account of the disparity in value of his compositions—here the virtuoso has the upper hand, here the pioneer—but on account of the fact that the aim is not always achieved. Some of Liszt's music is grandiose rather than grand, however high the theme, while the projected scheme is often more ambitious than is the power to carry it off adequate. Liszt is not a world-singer in the same sense as Bach, Beethoven, or Wagner, yet we cannot point to any man with a wider view, or to any whom we can less reasonably charge with intellectual parochialism. The "Dante" and "Faust" symphonies are, certainly, on a pedestal, and Liszt's better works, which we must sift from his lesser ones, have not yet had anything like justice done to them by the jury of the public. If, in acknowledging the extraordinary interest and peculiar nature of those two symphonies,



we are prone to make mental reservations, frankness will compel us to declare that what, in the end, separates Liszt from the writer of the authentic and indisputable Grand Style is, as it must inevitably be, the quality of the music, the stuff which he offered. Critical judgment and ingenuity are profitably employed in getting at the right and wrong of this delicate matter. Liszt has a decided claim to be rated very much higher than some pundits and oracles appear to consider. Part, and a great part, of this claim is based on historical ground, which cannot weigh with us very much, if at all, in the present enquiry. Liszt was the heroic exponent of romanticism, as Chopin was its intimate spokesman, Weber its pictorial artist, Berlioz its flame. Viewed in relation to the romantic movement, it is right to say that Liszt had the grand manner, which is not the same thing as the authentic Grand Style. So we are thrown back on the music itself, as it is, and as it sounds. If you feel that the thought, the emotion, the strength, warmth, and suitability of it are in true and full measure worthy of the theme, Liszt has some right to be included among the few who achieved the Grand Style. If, on the other hand, you are convinced that he is bombastic and flamboyant, that this music owes everything to externals, you must reject his candidature. There remains the middle course, the view that credits Liszt with occasional success in this matter, and with, perhaps, more than occasional failure. In Wagner we detected the presence of a kind of divine accommodation, a natural adjustment. He is not always upon the heights, and I, for one, do not think that continual residence at the summit is a necessary qualification. That is to say, a departure from the Grand Style does not of itself render a man ineligible for admission to the favoured circle. It is the *cause* of the departure which is the determining factor. So the thing needful to remember is that Wagner's descent to the slopes does not arise from a lack of strength, or from a failure to maintain himself where he ought to be. We have reached the *crux* of the problem if we ask whether the "dip" in Liszt, which is so noticeable, has the same origin as the "dip" in Wagner.

Was it in reality Liszt's purpose to let his music down thus; or did the lowering in interest, or in the intrinsic worth of his music, come from his loyalty to a theoretical method that insisted upon payment of its tribute; or did it arise simply from the fact that he was a composer less gifted than, say, Wagner? I am inclined to think that the last part of the query offers us the proper clue. Liszt's imagination and ambition marched ahead of his power to realise his vision, though that power was not in itself one

to be scoffed at. Together with this goes the truth that he often overreached himself, with the result that he achieved the very grand style, which, in spite of its description, is a lesser one than that which occupies our attention. Apart from this, there dwells that in his best work which, sooner or later, according to our alertness, will force us to enquire whether we should not make it clear that grandeur itself may be of more than one kind.

Perhaps the needs of the situation are met if we grant Liszt the Grand Style with specific reservations. First, it is not the Grand Style as we meet it in the composers previously named. Secondly, it alternates with a descent to a lower plane, not merely, or always, to adapt the music to the quieter moment or less pressing occasion. On the contrary, the reduction is due, I believe, simply to an inherent inability to sustain the music on the higher level. It would, of course, be folly to deny that Liszt has also provided examples of a departure from the Grand Style, which serve the same purpose and have the same æsthetic justification as those of Wagner. The difference between the two springs from the circumstance that, in many other cases, the practical result is hardly what he obviously meant it to be.

I want to be scrupulously fair, if only because I believe Liszt to be one of the composers most commonly undervalued. One cannot breathe his name without feeling very strongly that there are a hundred testimonies to his natural gifts which are not produced in the open court so freely as they should be. But the most ardent defender of Liszt's originality and aptitudes will not improve his case by shutting his eyes to the truth. That we are testing his music in the course of an examination into the Grand Style means that we are testing music that is heterogeneous, for Liszt was impressionable at all points and responsive to many influences. At his worst, Liszt can be boring and vulgar. But not infrequently he is more empty than either. I do not imagine that many people will have a great deal to say in favour of "Festklänge," with its barren fanfares. When for the moment his hand lost some of its cunning, Liszt took refuge in a picturesque integument. There are other moments and phases more inspiring, nevertheless. We cannot be blind to his preoccupation with the highest and noblest aspects of his themes. "*Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*" draws us upward; in characteristic fashion, it contrasts the tranquillity of Nature, her law and order, her inward strength, with the conflicting voices of Humanity. Nature—Humanity; that is the spiritual basis of the work, and it is one which appealed forcibly to Liszt, who as a master of the antithesis

stands beside Victor Hugo. Something of this desire to endow his subject with its utmost significance, to show its applicability to all times and conditions, is present in "Tasso," which he designated as "*lamento e trionfo*." Upon our ears fall reminiscences of the sad beauty of the Venetian canals, the gentle waters of which conjure up visions of departed glories, and seem to hold some of the secrets of those golden, laughing hours when Frivolity went forth masked and powdered to the Carnival, and the song of the care-free floated over the lagoons. Later we are at the court of Ferrara, where the poet attached himself to Duke Alfonso, and argued with the well-lettered. But do we not feel that Liszt saw more in his subject than the tragedy of Tasso? It is the tragedy of the poet, whatever his period and place. Truly, this music sings the tragedy of Tasso, his own luckless destiny, and the increasing fame of his masterpiece. It sings also the neglect, misunderstanding, and ultimate victory of all true poets. The composition owes a great deal to the fact that Liszt saw the tragedy on the larger scale, and informed it with a deep, human feeling. Needless is it to add that Liszt gives us of his best when his imagination, kindled by the contemplation of his hero, or his theme, took wings at a time when his pen worked fluently.

When we leave Liszt, who is not outwith the debatable territory, we come to those who are most certainly within it. For the next composers to be taken in hand must be Strauss and Elgar. The difficulty we encounter in approaching the former is not unlike that to be found in the case just disposed of. It lies in the inequality of the total production. Considering the subjects chosen by him, the matter, manner, scope and compass of the music, Strauss has presented us with plenty of material on which to pronounce a judgment. It is the custom of hurried criticism to enlarge upon the demands Strauss makes in respect of players and instruments, and the natural inference of the unwary reader is that the uniqueness of the writer can be traced merely to the extravagance which he exhibits in this line. More remains to be said of, and for, Strauss than such criticism allows, and it is a thousand times more valuable. The test is once again the music itself. As he appears in "Don Juan," "Till Eulenspiegel," "Tod und Verklärung," "Don Quixote," "Heldenleben," and "Also sprach Zarathustra," Strauss is quite clearly of those who have the Grand Style. To make this plainer, one has but to record the outstanding characteristics of his writing. Normally his theme is not of the scrappy variety; in it there reside a thousand latent possibilities; he looks at music horizontally; he has, if any man living or dead has

it, the large curve which carries us on with a magnificent sweep; he can handle a weighty subject, that claims the maximum of concentration, nobly, and frequently sublimely; he can, likewise, hold the attention for some three quarters of an hour while he marches with his giant's steps, and all the time his music is tight and significant. He has a highly developed sense of form; indeed, the only right conception of it, for he realises that it bears a relationship to the content. There exist passages with which a general estimate of Strauss is bound to concern itself—the bleating of sheep in "Don Quixote," the battle in "Heldenleben," the fugue in "Also sprach Zarathustra," and other things of a similar kind. These, particularly the first and second, reveal a lesser aspect, undoubtedly. In them he probably shows his Achilles heel. Yet the lesser aspect is the result neither of a small or tired brain, nor of an inability to bring out what was within him. Supposing we take the view that such pages are to be deplored, we can still say that they are the result of a kind of wrongheadedness, of an error in method. Setting them aside, we find in our hands a generous bulk of music that gives us the sense of "bigness," and gains a height not to be reached save by the strong of wind and limb. Consider the opening of "Don Juan," consider the conflict and apotheosis of "Tod und Verklärung," the epilogue of "Heldenleben," the opening, the "Joys and Passions" section, and "Night Song" of "Also sprach Zarathustra," the trio at the end of "Der Rosenkavalier." There can be no hesitation about these examples. Or, to come still closer to the subject, consider the great climax at the commencement of "Also sprach Zarathustra," in which the organ joins the orchestra. The man who wrote that was no small, feeble tinkler. It must be insisted, however, that we are looking at the Strauss compositions in the light of what we conceive to be the Grand Style. Innumerable points to be made obtrude themselves at the bare mention of the titles. We have to keep clear of any discussion as to Strauss's virtues and failings that is irrelevant. On these virtues and failings the reader will have his own opinion. Whatever that opinion happens to be, it cannot alter the fact that Strauss possesses the Grand Style. In an age which hears much tintinnabulation, and at a time when the market is well stocked with musical narcotics, this should need no telling. Strauss has swept the deep sea. The full-breasted wave, throwing its spindrift toward the sky, rises in his surging score. Not here do we need to cry for fresh air, far less for the oxygen cylinder.

In Elgar, also, the Grand Style is present; that is to say, in the Elgar of the two symphonies, and the symphonic study, "Falstaff."

There are those who remain antipathetic to Elgar's music. From them will come opposition to the proposal to set him in the present company, because they see only the external bigness, the length of the works in point of time, but not in point of interest, the richness of the scoring, and, perhaps, the prodigious technique. Where disagreement raises its head is where the emotional value of the music, and its suitability, come to be considered. I can only say that if words have any meaning at all, Elgar cannot be turned at the door. If the Grand Style consists of depth, and weight, and height, in the power to soar with wings that are strong, in a great and impressive significance, in other and sundry qualities of a kindred nature, Elgar cannot be rejected. You may, or may not, like the aura which is designated by the word *Elgarian*. Like Strauss, Elgar has his own way of doing things. There are harmonies and skips in his melody that are characteristic of him, and of him alone. Once more, we come down to the rock bottom. Can you say that the first symphony is in other than the Grand Style, fully exemplified from the first bar to the last? Can you withhold the title of exponent of the Grand Style to the man who penned the opening *allegro* and the finale of the second symphony? Finally, can you name the style of "Falstaff" as anything at all save grand—"Falstaff," in which a Shakespearean subject is treated with a proper feeling for its humanity, in music worthy of it, and with what seems uncanny ease? If these three works be not in the Grand Style, I confess that that epithet means nothing to me, and I believe that definition is a lying jade whom we should boldly order to quit.

I do not think that the Russians have the Grand Style. A great deal of the attention paid to Russian music, and of the excitement which it kindled but a few years ago, was owing to its local tinge; we discerned something idiosyncratic of a far-off place, or an interesting people. In the first instance, it came to the Western mind like a breeze from the sea, fresh and invigorating. If something of the fascination has evaporated, and the sense of novelty been lost, the reason is not far to seek. So assiduously and indiscriminately was Russian music thrust upon us—musical geese often being classified as musical swans—that a natural reaction set in. We are paying for a surfeit; many a piece, interesting, suggestive, and charming in itself, is for the present, at least, placed at a very considerable disadvantage. To express it otherwise, the revulsion now felt by some people is an unfortunate legacy of the previous "boom." Here is music unlike that of the Germans, great or small. Place Brahms beside it, and the most

casual and indifferent student must be aware of the difference in mentality and method. Is that which made Russian music so attractive and stimulating at an early stage in our acquaintance with it, a thing that exhausts itself, and does not deeply affect us when we are thoroughly familiar with the compositions? Is Russian music a music that relies for its appeal on the accessories and superfluities? Whether this be so or not, no Russian I am acquainted with has the Grand Style. In saying this I recognize, of course, that there may exist in some inaccessible place a score which possesses it in the fullest measure; that, if it exist, it may be from the pen of some unknown person. Russia is a large country, in which music is widely cultivated. It is, consequently, impossible even for the most lynx-eyed and beaver-like critic to know every bar of Russian music at a given moment. But turn to Rubinstein, for a start. I rule out Rubinstein at once. To him it is impossible to allot a high place as a composer. Was he more than a man who had the scribbling itch? Tchaikovsky and Glazounov are, no doubt in their own ways, symphonists, though the way of Tchaikovsky is as peculiar as the ways of Ah Sin were dark, and the way of Glazounov that of a musical journeyman. Tchaikovsky's music forms a tempting bait; so much can be said for it, and against it. To be allowed the Grand Style, he is too fussy; and we meet too much padding, even in his best work. In him we find also an unusual proportion of a strange kind of confidential utterance—Tchaikovsky wore his heart upon his sleeve—but it is confidence of the wrong kind. The "Pathétique," for instance, is not the tragic muse garbed sombrely, whose grief lies deeply hidden in the soul. It is the fretful, peevish, simpering little figure of *fin de siècle*, shedding tears all over the world. Familiarity with Tchaikovsky's music tends to abolish any sense of "bigness" that the neophyte may experience; a fourth, fifth, or tenth hearing of the symphonies will bring with it a clearness in this respect, and show the intelligent hearer that the "bigness" for which we call is not in them to be discovered. In fact, what really for a time allures us here is patent, not latent. Tchaikovsky, the musician, has no instep. No sooner have you half persuaded yourself that he is just about to accomplish a great feat, or exhibit a superiority of mind or feeling, than some trivial or vulgar passage assaults your ear. The next page may hold a surprise, or, as you come to know by experience, a disappointment. Glazounov's is a case very different. The plan and the "laying out" of Glazounov's symphonies are sadly at variance with their content. He is empty of vital matter. With every possible technical contrivance in his



box of tricks, has he created a symphony which is not hollow? Language was given to man to conceal his thought, maybe; Glazounov chose music to conceal his lack of it. He is like a geometrical point, having position, but no magnitude. I do not think I am wrong if I say that the other prominent Russian composers do not offer us examples of the Grand Style. Even Rachmaninoff's fine second symphony, with its constant interest and profusion of beauty, with its eloquence equal to that of Tchaikovsky, and its earnestness that is in a measure allied to that of Brahms, fails, somehow, to give me that definite and final sense of the Grand Style. Russian music still draws very generously upon the folk-song, and the folk-song idioms. Even when the composer has approached the West and breathed its intellectual air, he is frequently like the Chinaman who wears his native garb, but lends it piquancy by adding one or two European garments; all of which augments critical interest, if it also supplies us with a text for a sermon on style. Should one, then, say that a more or less strict adherence to the folk-song manner is, in the present instance, incompatible with the attainment of the Grand Style?

And what of the French? I have more than once pointed out that the attraction of French music at any particular period is distributed among a number of musicians, not one of whom can be called, in any historical sense, a master. For all her glory and her wealth in temperament, idea, and phrase, France has not given to the world a Dante or a Shakespeare, nor has she given to it a Bach, a Beethoven, or a Wagner. Berlioz forms the greatest height touched by French music, rough and volcanic as the mountain itself is. But the Berlioz of the "*Symphonie fantastique*" and of "*Romeo and Juliet*," with his burning imaginative power, seems to me too fragmentary, explosive, and erratic to be set with those on whom the mantle has fallen. Though in a certain and unique way Berlioz has "bigness," it is hardly "bigness" in the sense that justifies his admittance to the favoured coterie. Sublime is not the first word we should use when talking of his music. In speaking thus, I feel that a great deal needs to be said about him which is not usually said; that his shortcomings, which are there for all eyes to see and ears to hear, are pretty generally enlarged upon, while his merits, which are often for the keen eye to see and the quick ear to discern, are but cursorily handled. What I say of him I base on an experience of those works which most commonly figure on orchestral programmes. Unfortunately, it is but rarely that the remainder of his music sounds in concert halls.

Apart from Berlioz, only Franck's one experiment in the symphonic domain need detain us. For, though born in Belgium, Franck may suitably be considered here, as he has come to be identified with an important phase of French music. Regret that he wrote only one symphony will always be mingled with joy that it is a symphony so noble and sincere. The composition, to the last drum tap, discloses the man. Every page has been felt as well as written. The music flows from a fountain pure and clear. In contrast to some symphonies, this specimen is symphonic, holding to a rich speech, and depending neither on tricks nor vain strivings. All that Franck set out to do, he has done thoroughly. At the end of it, a sense of completeness takes possession of us. With this sense of completeness goes one of amplitude. The initial *largo*, so pregnant of fateful things to follow, does not turn out a false prophet. In the succeeding *allegro* we are plunged into the Grand Style. Passion reigns when the first subject dominates the score. On arriving at the inspired, and inspiring, second subject, we have no hesitation in calling Franck, as here revealed, a big man. The music of the entire symphony is, in fact, large in every sense. In listening to it, we have, somehow, got to the very core of things, and penetrated regions the doors of which can never be opened by puny Lilliputians.

Leaving Berlioz and Franck, we pass, I believe, from the region of doubt. No earlier French musician clamours for mention; no later. The Gounod of "The Redemption" and "Mors et Vita" is small fry indeed. Saint-Saëns, Lalo, Bizet, Massenet, Delibes and Chabrier are far outwith our boundaries. Later composers, like Debussy, Ravel, and Dukas, do not come any nearer to it. The Grand Style is the oak; French music of to-day is the poppy. In contemplating it, we have to ask ourselves whether the static music, so widely exploited in France at present, with its perpendicular view and its harmonic (perhaps one ought to say chordal) interest, can ever achieve what we have in mind. Are a wider throw and a more vigorous momentum not imperatively necessary? Is the insistence upon the musical equivalent of "*le mot propre*," is the preoccupation with nuance and atmosphere, as the modern French interpret the terms, not an obstacle to the attainment of the Grand Style? The artistic world, no less than the physical, belongs to the energetic. Zola held that "*une œuvre d'art est un coin de la nature vu à travers un tempérament*." At the moment the French seem to lay stress upon the "corner." In the aggregate, their music does not leave the commentator high and dry, for it lends itself to criticism, and provides

a rich field for discourse. But one cannot repress a feeling that it has reached the end of the road. It needs the wind of heaven and the ground swell of the ocean. It needs rain from the clouds to give it a fresh complexion, and a healthy appetite. It has arrived at the perilous hour when a new turning must be taken if it is not to suffer the loss of vitality that results from lack of blood-mixture. Echoes of Debussy are as far removed from the authentic Grand Style as anything could be, which said, a word of warning has to be pronounced. This is not a denunciation. It is a description of the situation as I see it; a statement concerning French music, as it appears when we look at it from the point of view of the Grand Style. That the output of the last five-and-twenty years contains much of cleverness, resource and charm none will dispute; and it should not be incumbent to add that a man must obey his bias, and be loyal to that which reposes within, though this does not mean that he must keep his mind hermetically sealed against the ideas that the world gives birth to. The large and imposing work has its place, time, and function; the small its place, time, and function also. The lover of the epic need not be the enemy of the sonnet, or he who revels in Wagner and Strauss impervious to the sweet voice of Chopin, or the naïve accents of the clavicinists. We do not march to knowledge, or enrich ourselves by developing futile antagonisms. The world, life, and human feeling call for the presence of many things, because moods change, because the tropics are hot and the arctic regions cold, because the sons of men are of divers kinds, because monotony of diet brings trouble in its wake. It is not our task to set one art-work against its neighbour. We must use to the full all that is beautiful and ennobling. French music takes its place in the scheme of things; we may leave it at that.

We are still left with an appalling amount of untouched material. It may satisfy the reader if some brief notice be taken of two men who will be familiar to him. What are we to say of Handel, and of Brahms? A large proportion of Handel's music sounds very old-fashioned now-a-days, if not downright archaic. Dissociating it from the stuffy and pedantic type of individual who is so commonly immersed in it, I cannot, with justice, refuse to put Handel in the gallery. In such a chorus as the "Hallelujah," Handel, striking like a thunderbolt, exhibits the Grand Style. There is in the piece "bigness" of the right sort, a "bigness" that is not lost to us though the notes are as familiar as the alphabet, as expected as to-morrow's sunrise. About Brahms there can be no such unanimity, the verdicts concerning his music resembling

those concerning the music of Liszt, in that they are many and varied. Parrot-talk of "the three B's" is compromising. For those who indulge in it, Brahms presumably remains beyond all doubt one of the exemplars of the Grand Style. From others, who do not quite subscribe to the compressed gospel of "the three B's," we may, at any rate, look for more caution. I am not a Brahmsian, if the word represents one who places the Hamburg composer on the same platform as Beethoven. Making all the proper allowances, he strikes me as a musician of lower rank. This, doubtless, remains a matter of taste and "psychic disposition." More promising will it be to touch the nerve centre of the Brahms problem, as it emerges here. Brahms has two distinct aspects. At his best, he is, certainly, a man of considerable stature, a man who might show his countenance in any company, a man whose music does not in the smallest degree rely upon the trivial, the fashionable, or the facile. In his Olympian moments, if he does not offer us the Grand Style as we have it in Bach or in Beethoven, he offers us something near to it. The song has a soaring quality; his music enfolds itself slowly, as though with a trust in its own inherent strength. He sounds the deep, satisfying note, that is the more satisfying the more you hear it. This first, this noble Brahms is the Brahms of the finale of the first symphony, of the second and fourth symphonies, of the masterly violin concerto, and of the slow movement of the quintet. There would be less trouble in "placing" him were it not for the Mr. Hyde that haunted this Dr. Jekyll. In his second aspect, he not only nodded rather more frequently than good manners permit—he positively snored. A considerable portion of the first and third symphonies appears to me to belong to his less happy moods. The entire double concerto, that pyramid of dulness, shows us Brahms at his very worst, a commonplace and mechanical music-spinner, who could write an elaborate work without once exhibiting so much as a momentary flicker of the divine fire. One can hardly believe that the composer of this masterpiece of aridity was the man who put on paper the fourth symphony. Perhaps, in these days of psychology, there remains some doubt as to this; if so, it may be a mitigating circumstance, though, unhappily, it cannot render the double concerto other than it is. If interest be the test of length, this score makes a draft upon eternity.

With the good qualities of Brahms, earnestness, sobriety, a distaste of the flashy, a contempt for the half-digested, went grave shortcomings, dulness, writing for writing's sake, or, at least, writing when the impulse was either non-existent, or not

vital enough to make its effect. I should not quarrel with the man who pleaded the cause of Brahms, were it based on the last movement of the first symphony, on the second symphony, and on the violin concerto. I should totally disagree with him if he called the third symphony, or the double concerto as evidence. If we are to allow Brahms to remain with those we have spoken of as possessing the Grand Style, we ought to make it quite clear that he may do so by virtue of such works as the former, and by virtue of them alone.

Not being a Chinese drama, this dissertation has to be drawn to a close. In finishing, I am very conscious that only the fringe of a vast subject has been touched. A thousand questions, like birds on the wing, fly before us. The name of this man, and that, and the other, leap to mind. Little points in style, theme, or manner clamour for elucidation—little, only seemingly, because nothing that deeply concerns art is little at all. In summing up, let us recognise that each man has his own constituency, to which he must be faithful. There are minor composers who, working in a small compass, vie with the Japanese artist in delicacy of touch. The miniaturist being a miniaturist, no good purpose can be served by calling him anything else. It is for us to see in him what he is. Thus, to acknowledge the Grand Style is not to frown on music that cannot boast it. It is merely to hail the great and noble song, when it falls upon our ears. And the time we spend with those who tower high above us, and touch the clouds colossus-like, can hardly fail to be a time rich in its revelations, and inspiring in its influences.

## SOME NOTES ON COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

By HERBERT ANTCLIFFE

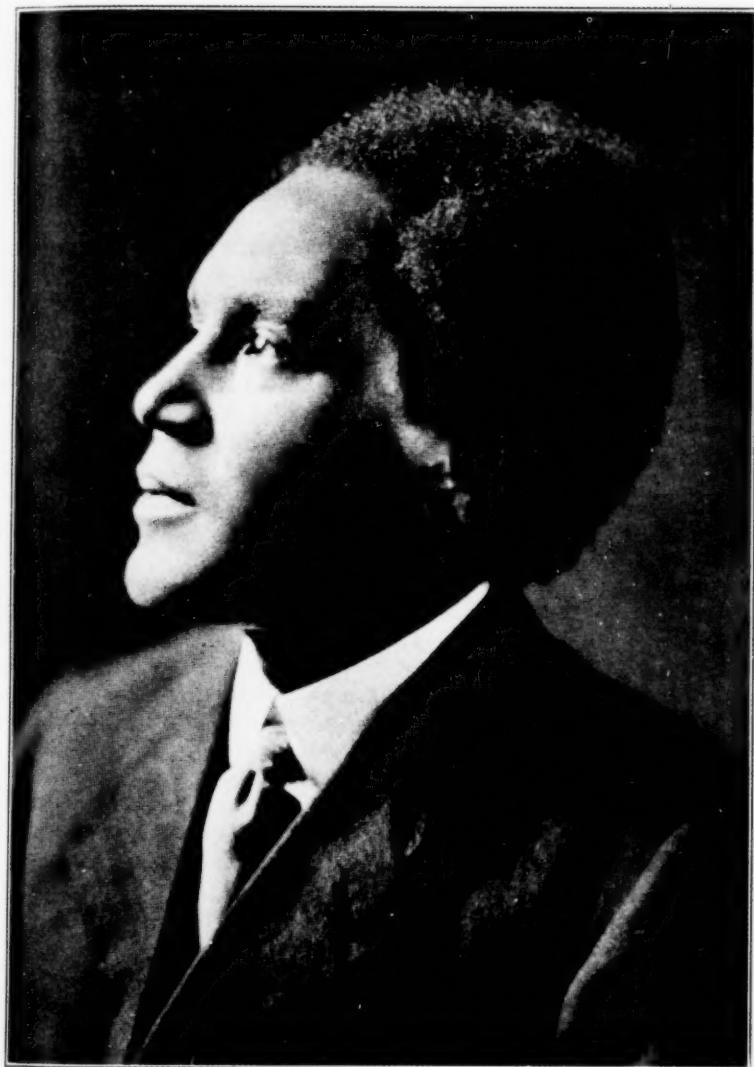
IT is related that Jules Massenet, on reading a copy of Coleridge-Taylor's *Song of Hiawatha*, and without knowing who the composer was, remarked, "That was written by a man of colour." Of course, "the coloured races" are as varied as the white races, or more so; but Coleridge-Taylor was representative in many respects of the vast negro race to which he more than half belonged, as well as the great champion in the opposition to their exclusion on mere grounds of colour from artistic circles. His birth and residence in London, doubtless helped in this latter matter. In spite of the pride which he feels in the history of his country, in spite of a certain arrogance arising from this, and in spite of a foolish despite of all that is outside his insular conventions, there is no one so free from actual racial prejudice as the average Englishman. He will not only welcome to his country men of every race and colour, but will help them whole-heartedly even in competition against himself. Not only legally, but socially and in business, every man in England has the same chance, whatever his colour or race. This is not to say there is no natural feeling of distrust and wonder at the achievements of those who are of a different race. Even in the great metropolis of this Empire of mixed races, in London itself, the black man does not always love the white, nor the white man trust the yellow. The difficulties he had to overcome because of his colour, therefore, were just sufficient to make the achievements of Coleridge-Taylor a racial triumph, while they were not so nearly insuperable as they might have been where the race feeling was keener or more bitter. Had he on the other hand appeared among men of his own race and colour it is possible, even probable, that what he did in the way of art would have been largely ignored and forgotten, nor would he have had the same opportunity of developing his talent and its products. From every point of view London would seem to be the place most propitious for the appearance of such an artist, and it was here that he was born and where his first and greatest triumph as a composer was accomplished.

For those who regard signs and dates as of significance it is perhaps not without interest to note that he was born on 10th



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August, 1875, just six months after the death of Sterndale Bennett, the greatest British composer of the nineteenth century. His father was a full-blooded negro from Sierra Leone, a medical man of considerable ability but little mental or moral stamina, and the boy was brought up by others. His general education, except so far as he acquired it from his own reading and observation, was that of the better type of working class in England, which, it may be observed, is not entirely unmusical, and was less so forty years ago than now. He was a choir boy, and at fifteen found a patron who placed him in the Royal College of Music, where he studied the violin, and later counterpoint under J. F. Bridge and composition under Stanford. His earliest compositions, written about this time and some of them published a few years later, were church anthems, the interest in which lies in the fact that they were written by a boy of that age.

Under Stanford he made rapid progress with his technic, without losing, in fact rather adding to, his individuality. By 1896 he had completed a Symphony which was played by the College orchestra, and showed already his desire to gain for negro music the recognition he considered was its due. Besides this he exhibited more than might be expected of signs of the knowledge and control of orchestral timbre which was one of his most striking attributes later. Thematically the work is partly original and partly based upon negro tunes. Like most other young composers he found the greatest difficulty in writing an effective Finale, and here the teaching and criticism of his professor proved of great benefit. Alterations were made from time to time in this movement, which, at first a mechanical, uninspired work, became eventually a strong, virile piece of music. It was the slow movement, *A Lament*, which won the most favour at the semi-public performance in the College at the end of the Easter term of 1896. As it stands to-day, it is not unlikely that the finale would be equally popular. One of the most striking features of the orchestration is the rich, but often delicate scoring for the brass instruments, which in his later works was nearly always a notable characteristic.

His *Four Characteristic Waltzes*, written about the same time as the symphony (if not earlier) and which have since seized the popular fancy, have more relation to his other early works, particularly in the orchestration. His constant employment of the device of repeated unison passages varied on each repetition by the use of a different quality of tone was in danger of becoming a mannerism. It escaped this, however, and we find it used with something approaching genius in such a work as his *Ballade in A*

*minor* for orchestra, produced at the Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester in 1898. This short work is not only strikingly characteristic of the composer, but is one which every aspiring orchestral composer should know very thoroughly. At the time of its original production it was described as "barbaric," "wild," "uncouth," and by other adjectives which displayed a complete lack of understanding of its qualities, though its popularity was never in doubt. While everybody now admits the incorrectness of these descriptions, the work still remains one that could not have been written by a composer of pure European descent. Its themes (there are two of them) are original and perhaps less noticeably negro in their origin than those of many of his other works; in treatment it belongs to the mind of "a man of colour" as much as any of them. Yet never does it go outside recognised methods in either harmonic, melodic, orchestral or formal structure; which fact makes its indubitable originality all the more remarkable. It was not to the advantage of the work that the composer conducted its first performance, for, enthusiastic and painstaking as he was in this as in everything else, Coleridge-Taylor never became more than a second-rate conductor even of his own works.

More than one writer has suggested that the second theme, because of its broad flowing character, is outside his negro tradition; but so far from this being the case, it falls in with negro music in general by its splendid contrast with the vigorous rhythm of the principal theme. This sense of contrast is the possession of all races, but none has it more fully than have those of tropical Africa.

There probably never has been an orchestral work of such importance, intrinsically and in its relation to the world of music, that has been constructed on so simple a scheme of tonality, theme and orchestration. In its 460 measures it modulates from A minor into the relative major, to the dominant, to C minor, to F major and (for a few bars only) into D flat, i. e., transposed C sharp, major, and to no other key unless it be a momentary transition. As already mentioned it has but two themes, though the first is easily divided, and these two are subjected to little variation and practically no development. Occasionally they are combined or merged one in the other; more often they are repeated with varied orchestration and occasionally with varied harmony, this last consisting chiefly of inversions of the opening harmony, so that the inverted pedal, e. g., becomes an uninverted one. When we analyse the work to discover the qualities which make it so distinctive, we are able to discern only the one supreme and

indefinable one which we call genius. Schubert wrote nothing simpler or more melodious; and neither he nor Weber produced more beautiful and richly balanced tones from the orchestra, while not Haydn nor Mozart was more direct in his structural methods.

This is the work which more than any other strikes the keynote of his style and method as an orchestral writer. It is as distinctive and also as typical as *The Song of Hiawatha*, and no small part of its effectiveness lies in the fact that it is entirely different. In these two works we see the composer's grasp of his media, two separate media demanding and obtaining entirely different treatment. They are the two works which have won a complete recognition by all classes of music lovers, and though some of his lighter orchestral pieces have perhaps been more popular, the *Ballade* stands as the classic example of his orchestral genius. It anticipated his other works in its economy of thematic material, as well as in its characteristic energy and unfailing melody. The many varieties of form and colour which later he could give to a phrase or a figure are suggested in it, while the perfect homogeneity of its feeling was as marked as in the works of his latest and most mature period. Perhaps one little weakness is the recurrence several times of a bridge passage of no particular significance, though in the sweep of the work as a whole this is scarcely noticeable, and does not seriously interfere with the general interest of the work.

This weakness of constructive method quickly disappeared, and in the *Fantasiestück in A major* for Violoncello and Orchestra, a work in variation form, one of the most notable features is the absence of any apparent bridge passages at all. After this work had been played several times during the year 1907, the score, unfortunately, was lost in its wanderings, so that only a brief note written from memory is possible. Its theme is a broadly outlined melody in the composer's favourite *a-b-a* form, announced by the solo instrument, and eminently characteristic of it. Each of the half dozen or so variations remains very faithful to the original theme, though the scheme of tonality is a somewhat diverse one—A major, F major, F sharp minor, A flat major, etc. Although lightly scored so as to keep the solo part prominent against a contrasted background, it works up to a climax that is big in tone as well as in emotion. Its ideas generally, like most of those in Coleridge-Taylor's music, are persuasive rather than peremptory, and its loss after so few performances makes the world poorer of music that possessed a most satisfying charm.

Being himself a violinist of no inconsiderable ability, it is not surprising that much of his most effective music, a Concertstück, a Sonata, *Four African Dances*, two Ballades and many smaller pieces, were written with the violin as the principal instrument. Of these the most important, or at least the most ambitious, is the Violin Concerto in G minor, Op. 80. This was written during his first successful visit to the United States, and was based principally upon negro melodies, of which he had made a large collection. As it was commissioned by Carl Stoeckel and intended to be played by Maud Powell, Coleridge-Taylor not unnaturally endeavoured to meet the ideas of these two, both of whom he recognised as musicians of a high order. One of their suggestions which he accepted was that he should use "Yankee Doodle" as one of the principal themes, which he did by making it the second theme of the finale. Unfortunately neither this tune nor the original first theme of that movement inspired him to any real outburst of music, and the result was a movement that was scrappy and unsatisfactory, though not without some moments of beauty and some fine strong writing for both soloist and orchestra. Less pleased even than were his critics, the composer decided to lay the work aside, and had not better counsels prevailed it would probably have shared the fate of other unsatisfactory works and been consigned to the fire. On his return to England he decided to rewrite the work entirely, and in doing so discarded both themes and treatment of the last movement and used only short fragments from the second one. What the cause of dissatisfaction with this second movement was, it is difficult to see, for it is a piece of real beauty, based on the negro melody, "Many thousand gone." It is now published as a separate work. Possibly it was the same general feeling of dissatisfaction with what was done and of the great potentiality of what was to come which made him from time to time offer huge holocausts of manuscripts on the altar of efficiency and good work.

In the new version the first movement, in which he retained the principal theme as well as many of the details of the original work, and the finale, stand out for their nobility, as well as for the effectiveness from the technical point of view of their rhythm and orchestration. We find in the themes, just as in those of some of his earlier works, melodic cadences which theoretically are feminine, but which in effect are not only virile but masculine. Very striking in this respect is the opening theme, which forms a strong contrast to its companion theme, the latter being actually and clearly feminine in its close, or the curiously piquant second





A page from the original manuscript of Coleridge-Taylor's Violin Concerto.

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theme of the finale. Although written some years later, there is a certain affinity between two of these and the principal melody of the orchestral *Ballade*, while it will be remembered that the same feminine cadence occurs again and again in the thematic material of *The Song of Hiawatha*.

Another work commissioned by Stoeckel was an orchestral piece, for which he supplied the *Bamboula*, an early work rewritten with the experience of later years, and particularly with his increased knowledge of negro music. It gets its name as well as its principal motive from the dance melody well known from its association with the negroes of the West Indies. What have probably done more to cause its popularity than anything else are the energy of its movement and the piquancy of its orchestration, for it carries the hearer along in a swirl of sound that never fails of sensation. Its cleverness is not so obvious as is that of some of his other works. Here he laid himself out to write a work which should be simple and popular, and achieved these characteristics in a marked degree. Not that it is in any way unworthy of its composer or lacking in real musicianship; but it is not a work which strikes the hearer as anything more than an able and interesting little number which most qualified musicians with a bent to constructive work could have written. Unlike many popular numbers by composers of higher powers, it helps towards popularity without detracting at all from his serious reputation. It preserves the original movement of the native dance, but also contrasts, and by doing so somewhat accentuates, its character with a theme that is more in keeping with conventional musical ideas, although even the contrasting theme is based on that with which it is contrasted. In this matter it bears a close resemblance to the *Ballade*.

Several times and at different periods Coleridge-Taylor tried his hand at opera writing, and with widely differing results. His first attempt was a little romantic opera, *The Dream Lovers*, which is notable for its delightful feeling and suave melody rather than for its dramatic qualities or those of a deeper musical character. Later he wrote a cantata-operetta, *The Gitanos*, for female voices, which also is more musical than dramatic. *Endymion's Dream*, a short one-act work to a libretto based on the work of John Keats, is essentially Wagnerian in its methods. It has been published as a cantata and in that form is not unpopular. It has only occasionally been played as an opera, the Keats Centenary forming the occasion for several such performances. Without being equal to the best of his other work, it is full of passion and feeling, and its scoring is in a manner new to the composer, if not unique in all

his work. In it he seems to be preparing the way for the style which fully appeared for the first and last time in *A Tale of Old Japan*. Not so the longer and more ambitious three-act work, *Thelma*, upon which he himself built great hopes.

If we judged his dramatic capabilities by this work we should be bound to place them in a low category. Its style seems to be modelled on that of the Italian-Irish composers of the nineteenth century, of Balfe and Wallace, and, to a less extent, of Bishop and Nicolai. There are nevertheless rhythms and instrumental combinations characteristic of Coleridge-Taylor himself, and there is, particularly in the last Act, some decidedly picturesque writing. The practised hand of the musician appears on every page of the score, but not the hand of the opera composer. This is curious in view of his experience, not yet exhausted at the time he wrote the opera but already very considerable, as a writer of incidental music for spoken plays. *Thelma*, however, is quite different from anything else he wrote, and with a more concise and dramatic libretto, allowing of strict condensation in the music, might have been made quite effective.

Some of the music was subsequently utilised for other purposes, chiefly in the incidental music to *Othello*, which is probably the most popular of his "Konversations-Musik," for which purpose it is used almost exclusively. Of incidental music for the stage he wrote much, chiefly for Beerbohm Tree, and nearly all was of a brilliant and sometimes gorgeous type. Besides *Othello* he wrote music for at least five dramas, *Faust*, *Nero*, *Herod*, *Ulysses* and *The Forest of Wild Thyme*, besides a ballet on *Hiawatha*. Most characteristic was that for *Nero*, and the least so—why it should be so is difficult to understand—that of the ballet. It is curious that this should be so, for, as a rule, interesting as this stage-music is, and full of melodies of an obvious but virile character, as a whole it falls nearer the mark of Kapellmeister music than anything else he has written. Still more striking is the comparative failure (I say comparative because it is good music and has met with a large amount of popular success) of the *Hiawatha* ballet, for some of his lighter music, the *Petite Suite de Concert*, for instance, possesses just the characteristics required for a good ballet. Some of the music published as pianoforte music, too, has these same qualities, and not improbably was intended for something of the kind. All his orchestral music was written first in close score, and generally without any indications of his wishes with regard to the orchestra. It seems likely, therefore, that in the last busy years of his life, when his works in general seemed likely

to be popular, he would write a number of pieces that would come in useful as occasion should demand. These he would leave in their original condition until he knew the resources available for the occasion of their utilisation.

His *Symphonic Variations on an African Air* (Op. 63), however, are in no wise occasional music, and these he seems to have written with very precise ideas and indications as to their orchestration, and to have scored with the utmost care and imagination, attaining something of the classical spirit in their construction. When one considers the strange neglect of Coleridge-Taylor's serious orchestral works, the most striking instance is this, the biggest in almost every way of them all, which will compare favourably with similar works in the repertory of many leading orchestras, and might with advantage be on the table of every student of orchestration and musical development. Like many other works in the same form it is based on a theme that is not only very brief (eight bars repeated), but quite commonplace in character. Nevertheless, interest is aroused at once by the piquant scoring: melody on three trombones, *pp*, with accompaniment for strings, *tremolando*, timpani and gran cassa, to which flutes in short shakes are added on the repetition. Here again we notice the cross accent, the composer's native fondness for which has already been commented upon. This is in Common time and in E minor. A new melodic interest arises in the first variation, in triple time, with the theme, played by Oboe and Clarinet, extended by decorative *arpeggi* and varied by grace notes, to which is added a light but full and characteristic accompaniment in A minor for strings and harp. A rapid waltz-like movement, scored for strings, wood-wind, triangle and occasionally horns, follows. A casual reading of the score of this variation will lead to the criticism that it is commonplace and such as might easily be written by any ordinarily accomplished musician. There is in it, however, something very convincing; the onrush of the rhythm, the downward swoop of the melody in the first part and its subsequent soar to a climax, its fidelity in primary emotion to the theme and its perfect fusion of the tones of wind, strings and percussion, all make it a supreme example of its kind, even though that kind be a common one. Almost as noteworthy is the succeeding *appassionato* movement in duple time, a continuous melody for strings, supported by flutes, oboes and clarinets alternately, with sustained chromatic harmony on horns and bass trombone. After this the Waltz variation is repeated. Here we see again the composer's fondness, which was at times almost an obsession, for the simple ternary form. It is

used later in this work, though not so strictly, when he repeats the eighth variation, a beautiful plaintive little tune in alternate 6-8 and 3-4 rhythm, after a somewhat more vigorous one accompanied by a curious countermelody of triplets and quadrolets.

One is strongly tempted to describe at length each of the fourteen variations, for there is not one but has some characteristic, some figure of melody, some tonal quality, some device of metamorphosis, that is distinctive. It is not necessary to ask of such a work if it is a great emotional one or not. If it develops the theme on which it is based in such a manner as to make the interest cumulative, if it displays striking ingenuity in construction and invention while yet each figure and each development is based on the theme or on some part of it, and if it works towards a musical and stirring climax of tone, it carries out what is its primary and essential object. Coleridge-Taylor's *Symphonic Variations* does this, certainly, and I think it does considerably more. Even the *Ballade in A minor* and *The Song of Hiawatha* are not so thoroughly representative of the man, for the former is an early work in which his full personality and technique as an orchestral writer were not developed, while the latter is more of a magnificent interpretation of Longfellow's poem than an expression of his own nature. In the Variations we get a full exposition of the man's musical nature at its highest development, with all the variety of thought and all the vigour and tenderness of his manhood at work. We witness the piquant individuality of the man, his geniality and sentimental but virile tenderness, his racial fondness for strong rhythmic accents and his natural conservatism and regard for classic tradition. For these reasons, and particularly for its happy and rare combination of individuality and classicism, it is a work which properly presented should be as popular in its way as any of his smaller and lighter works. Certainly it might with advantage take the place of several works which appear in orchestral programmes *ad nauseam*, and with a fair certainty of being acceptable to all classes of hearers.

One need not, in considering the characteristics of Coleridge-Taylor's orchestral works, devote any very deep consideration to such of them as *Toussaint l'Ouverture*, the *Hemo Dance*, or the march, *Ethiopia Saluting the Colours*. They are works which are always interesting and enjoyable, both to performers and hearers, but they follow too closely the line of his more striking works of the same *genre* to provoke more than a passing reference. Of the first it may be said that, though not programme music in any serious way, it was probably his nearest approach to that



fascinating line of artistic activity. It was written in honour of the coloured soldier of that name and with his greatest exploit in mind, but there is no serious attempt to describe that or the emotions which caused it. Its object is rather that of a "Huldigungs-marsch" than a representative piece. The titles of the Four Visions in the *Faust* music, "Helen," "Cleopatra," "Messalina" and "Margaret," also suggest a programmatic idea which is partly carried out; but these, it must be remembered, are incidental to the drama, and such suggestions must necessarily, in order to avoid any clashing between stage and orchestra, be tentative and indefinite. Somewhat disappointing is this lack of attempt to write any serious descriptive or programmatic music for the orchestra, for his powers in this direction were undeniably great, and would have developed with exercise, particularly as he was deeply interested in all kinds of literature. These powers he exerted in some of his choral works with almost magical effect, not only when voices and instruments are combined, but also when the latter are heard alone.

After his great success with *The Song of Hiawatha* he never reached quite the same height of inspiration as a choral writer, possibly owing to the difficulty of finding poems suited to his individual genius. His successes, too, were on quite different lines and different subjects, and were more dependent upon the combination of chorus and orchestra than upon the pure choral writing. Even his part-songs, which are all good, but are none of them comparable with these greater works, are dependent to a large extent upon their accompaniments. Of his later choral works the most notable is *Meg Blane*, a short work for mezzo-soprano solo, chorus and orchestra. Here he gets all the rugged but tense emotion of Robert Buchanan's poem of the sea, as well as its graphic suggestions of the storm and the little boat struggling against the powers of nature. In the solo part there is a degree of pathos and expression that is nothing short of tremendous. But chorus and orchestra share in the picturesque side of the work, and the latter has the larger share. The subtitle of the work is "A Rhapsody of the Sea," and while it is rhapsodic the work is also one of the most dramatic in the whole literature of music. All the terror, the anxiety, the activity, the awe, the grandeur of the scene are represented, yet there is also all the exhilaration of the natural circumstances. In no other work has he written more finely for the orchestra, while the vocal parts fill in the narrative in an emotional manner that is more than adequate. *Kubla Khan*, for a similar group of voices and orchestra, is at the opposite pole

of emotion and activity, but affords scope for the composer's great descriptive powers, which were aroused by the actual setting of the words rather than by the abstract inspiration of the poems which pleased him.

Something of the same inspiration and technique obtain in *A Tale of Old Japan*, a work which came late in his career, but which branched out so successfully in an entirely new direction as to arouse hopes, finally crushed by the composer's early death, that he might even evolve a new style of choral ballad. He had already shown a degree of delicate lyricism in the *Bon Bon Suite*, a series of six short movements to words by Thomas Moore. In *A Tale of Old Japan* it was developed and refined to a high degree, and yet used as the expression—a perfect expression, though beyond the comprehension of some of our too realist modern musicians—of deep emotion. Yet it is an emotion that becomes tense only occasionally, and as a whole the work is one of lightness and charm, which is its greatest triumph!

Some of his critics have objected to the work of Coleridge-Taylor on the ground that it is marred, if not ruined, by his strict adhesion to classical forms. There can be no question that this has militated against its ready acceptance by a large body of conductors and performers who have been satiated by the many inferior and lifeless works in these forms which it falls to their lot to examine every year. Possibly—for he was of a somewhat timorous nature, even in his music—had he launched out more freely in matters of form and expression, Coleridge-Taylor would have been a more powerful writer than he actually was. It cannot be denied, however, that while he lacked the kind of initiative which invents new forms as did that of Liszt, Chopin, Debussy and some of their successors, or reconstitutes the old ones as that of Richard Strauss, Vincent d'Indy, Edward Elgar or Ildebrando Pizzetti (particularly in his great Sonata for violin and pianoforte), he has, like his elder contemporary Alexander Scriabin, adapted very thoroughly to his own purposes the classical forms.

One point at which, like Beethoven, he has always taken his own course without regard for precedent, is at the cadence, and here also he never repeated himself. A twelve-bar tonic pedal seems to have been a favourite device, but how varied he could make it is seen by comparing the close of the *Ballade in A minor* with that of a posthumous *Interlude for Organ*, with its full chords descending in irregular chromatic sequence to the Common Chord. That of *Meg Blane* is also on a tonic pedal, but with tonic chords only, major ninth, major sixth, minor sixth (first inversion of the

common chord of the flattened sixth) and tonic common chord. In *A Tale of Old Japan* the tonic pedal is inverted, with a descending chromatic bass, which rests and returns on the last three chords before the tonic triad, the bass notes of this return being the flattened sixth and flattened seventh. Yet in all of these is felt a perfect sense of strong grip and no loss of the satisfaction which a contrast of chord or tonality would presuppose. In *Hiawatha* he repeats a cadence that so far as the bass is concerned (key of E major descending, E, B, C sharp, C natural, B, C sharp, B, A sharp, A natural, E) might satisfy the schoolmen. When one analyses the harmony of these few closing bars, however, one discovers a disregard of convention that was working out by evolutionary methods and quite independently, and also without the scientific and arbitrary theories of Debussy and Scriabin, some of the chords and scales the use of which made the followers of the French and Russian composers hail them as great discoverers.

Coleridge-Taylor was a fluent writer and did not always wait for inspiration. In fact, he worked in almost too businesslike a way, keeping regular hours at his work, and not allowing concert engagements, of which he had a considerable number, to interfere with his daily quota of composition. In some matters a keen self-critic, he destroyed at regular intervals whatever manuscripts he considered not worthy of his talent. By this means it is not unlikely he sacrificed some works which posterity, or even his own further consideration, might have approved, if not placed in a high category. Unfortunately it did not comprise some which years of knowledge fail to make satisfactory: *The Atonement*, *The Blind Girl of Castel-Cuillé*, and some of his songs, for instance. Yet the works we have considered, and the fact that of the others not one lacks some inspired passages and all are written with keen musical and poetic feeling, make it appear strange that his reputation is based on so little of what he wrote. His orchestral works certainly ought, as a whole, to be as well known as those for voices, and the *Symphonic Variations*, the *Ballade in A minor*, the *Violin Concerto*, and possibly some of the chamber works for violin and pianoforte, to be placed in the repertory of instrumentalists on a level with *The Song of Hiawatha* and *A Tale of Old Japan* in the repertory of choral societies. Some of his work suffered, as did some of that of Schubert, of Mendelssohn, of Franck, even of Beethoven, and still more of Bach, from his too great fecundity; but none of it suffered, as does some of that of most facile and versatile writers, from prolixity or carelessness of production. He was conservative because his work was rooted deeply in the soil

of classic tradition, and his thoughts were sufficiently *selbstständig*, sufficiently self-contained and independent, to dispense with the invention of new methods of expression. He was, in fact, one of the most original thinkers among musicians of his generation, which enabled him to avoid any conscious or shallow attempt at originality for its own sake.

# THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF VIOLINISTS IN FRANCE BEFORE THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By MARC PINCHERLE

THE earliest violinists of whom we have any record are those of King Francis I. From the accounts of the Master of the Revels (*Menus-Plaisirs*) for February-March, 1529, we learn that "Jehan Haury, Pierre de la Planche, Pierre Champgilbert, Jehan Bellac, Jehan Fourcade, Nicolas Pirouet, *viollons* (violins),<sup>1</sup> hoboys and sackbuts, received the sum of forty-one livres (Tours currency), given and decreed to them to supply their needs and necessities."

Until the middle of the century we have hardly any other data than the lists of largesses which the musicians enjoyed at the hands of the sovereign: in 1533, twenty crowns (*écus*) each as a contribution toward the upkeep of their horses; in 1534, three hundred crowns collectively; in 1537, Jean Henry (the same whose name is spelled Haury in the document of 1529) is awarded the office of sergeant verger (*sergeant à verge*) of the Châtelet of Paris, "to dispose of for his own profit, and to administer for revenue as may seem good to him; in 1538 he is rewarded with the goods and property of Étienne Fourré, confiscated and escheated to the Crown, following a criminal homicide committed by the said Fourré. One could multiply these instances of marks of favor<sup>2</sup> at the court of the king of France as well as at those of the Dukes of Lorraine or the Italian princes.

Violinists in the costumes of Muses played at the entry of Henry II into Rouen<sup>3</sup> in 1550. Marguerite of Valois enumerates still other instances in her account of the festivities arranged by the city of Bayonne for Catherine de' Medici and her son, Charles

<sup>1</sup>H. Prunières. *La musique de la Chambre et de l'Écurie*. Année Musicale, 1911, p. 244. Contrary to the accepted opinion we are dealing here with a new family of instruments of which the soprano is really a violin in the modern sense of the word and not a modified form of viol.

<sup>2</sup>Actes de François I<sup>er</sup>. Paris, 1896-1905, tomes II, III, VII, VIII, passim. Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France. t. VIII, pp. 357, 358. Paris, 1836, etc.

<sup>3</sup>C'est la déduction du sumptueux ordre, plaisantz spectacles et magnifiques théâtres . . . dressés et exhibés . . . à Henry Second et à ma Dame Katharine de Médicis . . . Rouen 1551 chez Robert le Hoy.

IX: "each troupe dancing after the manner of its native land, those from Poitou with the bagpipe (cornemuse), the Provençals dancing the *volte* with the cymbals, those from Burgundy and the Champagne with the little hoboy, the soprano violin and the little drum (tabourin de village).<sup>1</sup>

We must not conclude from the fact that in the beginning we always find the violinists associated with the festivals of the nobility, that they occupied a particularly brilliant position. All the texts, edicts and accounts which mention them indicate their quality of domestics, acting "by the command and for the pleasure" of a master. The welcome which they receive from music lovers is rather reserved. In certain provinces they are ignored for a long time. There is no mention of a violin in a very long list of instruments given in 1557 by an amateur in Poitou: "The instruments with gut strings, which we use in this district (Poitou), are the hurdy-gurdy (*vielle*), the rebec, the viol, the lute and the gittern. . . Thus the hurdy-gurdy is the instrument of the blind, the rebec and the viol are for the minstrels, the lute and the gittern are for the musicians."<sup>2</sup> And if, at Lyons, the great center of violin making (perhaps its cradle), we find, a year earlier, a circumstantial description of the instrument, we may note the tone of marked disdain for the violin in which it is couched: "The violin is very much the opposite of the viol," writes Philibert-Jambe de Fer. "Its body is smaller, flatter, and it is much rougher in tone. . . We call viols the instrument which gentlemen, merchants and other people of quality use for their pastime. . . The other sort is called the violin, and it is the instrument commonly used in playing for the dance; and this for good reason, for it is easier to tune, because the fifth is pleasanter to the ear than the fourth. It is also easier to carry, which is a very necessary matter, even in conducting a wedding or a mummary. There are found few people who make use of it except those who make their living by it, as a trade."<sup>3</sup> In England also, at this period, according to Roger North, "the violin was scarce knowne tho' now the principall verb, and if it was any where seen, it was in the hands of a country croudero, who for the portability served himself of it."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mémoires. Publ. by Guessard. Paris, 1842; p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Discours non plus mélancolique que divers . . . Poitiers 1557 chez Enguilibert de Marnef. (Bibl. Mazarine.)

<sup>3</sup>Épitome musical des tons, sons et accords . . . Lyon 1556. On Philibert see the excellent article by G. Tricou, Revue Musicale de Lyon, May 15, 1908.

<sup>4</sup>Memoires of Musick, 1728. Edited by Rimbault, London. 1846; p. 80.



Thus the violin plays, with regard to the viol, the same rôle as that formerly played by the rebec. It was considered noisy, shrill, good at most for playing dance music.

This lack of esteem is easily explained. It is due in the first place to the brusquely increased sonority, which was so much the more noticeable as the well calculated proportions, the supple varnishes of Gasparo da Salò, Amati and Stradivari, which tempered its shrillness, had not yet been discovered. All progress along the line of tonal dynamics provokes a furious reaction. Like the criticisms which described Wagner's music as a tumult, so, at the height of the development of eighteenth-century music, Hubert le Blanc, whose fame as an author rests on his defense of the bass viol, voiced in vehement terms his regrets for the passing of the discreet tone qualities of former days.

But above all the awkward technique of an entirely new and in itself very difficult instrument was an obstacle to its diffusion.

In the rudimentary stage of its development this technique compelled the violin to restrict the display of its qualities to ensembles, where it performed its part with less suppleness than the other melody instruments or the human voice. How could it bear comparison with the lute and the viol, which, thanks to the greater number of their strings, their easier system of tuning, were capable of executing the most varied ornamental formulas, sustained accompaniments and even polyphonic pieces, and which, sufficient unto themselves, conferred upon the player the individuality of the virtuoso?

This situation was soon to be altered. When Brantôme adjudges Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx "the best violinist in Christendom" it is possible that the eulogy might still have been considered somewhat faint, and to have been paid rather to his qualities as an organizer of ballets. We know, on the contrary, that fifty years later talented players had appeared, who had set the true nature of the instrument in its proper light. Thenceforward we no longer meet with those musicians who united in themselves the rôle of oboe and violin players, as was the custom in England throughout the whole of the seventeenth century, a usage which bore witness to a twofold mediocrity.<sup>1</sup> "Those who have heard the King's twenty-four violins," writes Mersenne,

<sup>1</sup>The latest mention of this which I have met is on the 25th of April, 1597, a donation to Jean Périchon, hoboy and violin of the King's chamber. See Écorchville: *Actes d'État-civil de musiciens insinués au Châtelet de Paris*. Paris, 1907. p. 79. For England see the numerous examples of "violin and sackbut, or cornet, or hoboy" up to 1699 in Cart de Lafontaine, *The King's Musick*, London: (Novello) n. d.

"admit that they have never heard anything more ravishing or more effective. Hence it comes that this instrument is, of all, the most proper for the dance, as we may observe in the ballets and on all hands elsewhere. Now the beauties and the graces that are practised upon it are so great in number, that one may prefer it to all instruments, for the strokes of the bow are so ravishing, that there is no greater disappointment than not to hear it to the end, particularly when they are intermingled with trills and with easy touches of the left hand, which compel the hearer to confess that the violin is the king of instruments."<sup>1</sup> Bocan, Lazarin and Constantin figure in this period as artists. Their renown spread over the whole of France, and although they were in certain points far inferior to the Italians and to the Germans, yet foreigners at times sought lessons of them.<sup>2</sup> They, in their turn, looked down upon the miserable rebec. The *Roi des Ménestriers* (Chief of the Guild of Minstrels) in reiterated ordinances forbids the use in cabarets and ill-famed places "of soprano, bass and other kinds of violins, but only of the rebec."<sup>3</sup>

This, however, does not prevent the continued distinction between the noble instruments, above all the lute, and the violin whose use devolved upon hired musicians and was restricted to the performance of ensembles.

The king's violins had the rank of domestics. Of course, numerous pecuniary privileges, exemption from certain taxes, unattachable emoluments, gratuities of all kinds, sometimes made rich men of them. But they were subjected to a stern discipline, particularly when Lully undertook to train them in his style. Their obligations were to play during the King's repasts, in ballets, "upon entries into cities, at weddings and on other solemn or joyous occasions." At times they had to dress in costume and to take part in various figures of a ballet, as in the *Ballet de Flore* (1669), in which they represented "six African men, six African women," and natives of four other parts of the world; or in the ballet of the "Doubles Femmes," in which "the *entrée* was made by violins so dressed as to appear to play their instruments behind their backs."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Traité des instrumens à cordes. Liv. IV, p. 177. Paris, 1636. In the same treatise we find interesting details about the vibrato, the trill, the graces and the "diminutions" already practiced by the élite.

<sup>2</sup>On French violinists at the English court, chiefly under Charles II, see E. Van der Straeten: *The Romance of the Fiddle*. London, 1911.

<sup>3</sup>Fr. Thoinan: *Louis Constantin, roi des Violins*. Paris, 1878; pp. 8 and 9.

<sup>4</sup>De Marolles, cited by J. Écorcheville: *Vingt suites d'orchestre du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle français*. Paris, 1906. Tome I; which see for data relating to the material situation of the Twenty-four Violins.

It soon became the fashion for every nobleman to support a band of violins,<sup>1</sup> or, more economically at times, to engage, with a twofold end in view, lackeys who were capable of serving at table and of playing for the dance, as did the Count of Montbrun, "who had a number of domestics to serve him, but who took none that could not play the violin."<sup>2</sup>

Taken all in all, it was a happy enough lot, when one compares it with the lot of the minstrels, deprived of such patronage, subjected to very strict police regulations, paid poorly or not at all, obliged to band together to travel the highways in search of some occasion for the exercise of their trade, or to be, like Pierre Guiard of Grenoble, "weaver and violin player" at the same time,<sup>3</sup> or happy, like Barthélemy Vallier, to receive in exchange for their lessons "the price of four livres, ten sous for each month, a bonus of four livres, and in addition a four-ox cartload of wood and a measure (*charge*) of wine from the valley of Lumbin."<sup>4</sup>

This humble condition of the violinists did not fail in its turn to reflect upon their instrument a permanent character of vulgarity and ignobility, which delayed for some time its admission into polite circles. As Tallemant des Réaux relates, "the small reputation of Chabot [the Duke of Chabot] for courage, his beggarliness and the dance by which he made his living were responsible for more stories about him than were warranted.... One day in the Palais Royal on the occasion of I know not what grand ball, the Marquis of Saint Luc, when the violins had been ordered to proceed from one place to another, remarked in a loud voice, 'They will do nothing of the kind unless you give each one of them a duke's title.' By which he meant to say that Chabot, who had made a *courante* and who was nicknamed *Chabot la courante*, for he had two brothers, was nothing but a violin player."<sup>5</sup>

This condition of discredit continued until it was ended by the introduction into France of a new musical form—the sonata. Coming from Italy, the sonata gave the violin a singular relief in the concert of instruments. The loftier style of this genre, its character of individuality, the fact also of its ultramontane

<sup>1</sup>See Michel Brenet: *Les Concerts en France sous l'ancien régime*. Paris, 1900. p. 67 *et seq.*; and A. Pirro in the *Revue Musicale*, Nov. 1, 1920; pp. 14-16.

<sup>2</sup>Ecorcheville: *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>In 1656. See E. Maignien: *Les Artistes Grenoblois*. Grenoble, 1887, p. 165.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 350.

<sup>5</sup>*Historiettes* (written before 1657), publ. by Monmerqué. Paris, 1854. T.III, p. 438.

origin, were factors calculated to awaken the interest of the music lovers of that day.

Thanks to the sonata, the violin gradually made its way among genteel people. By the beginning of the eighteenth century it was accepted by them without reserve. Lecerf de la Vieville, in 1755, writes: "This instrument has no high rank in France... one finds few people of condition who play it... But after all, a man of position who is minded to play it does not discredit himself." In 1738 the *Mercure de France* is obliged to curb the zeal of the *grands seigneurs*, who, not content with merely playing upon the instrument, make a display of their skill and enter into rivalry with the professionals.<sup>1</sup> The violin has won the vogue which was denied it for two centuries. The private concerts, the provincial academies, seek it out; its virtuosos are fêted at court; the *Concert Spirituel* gives it so large a place in its programs, that the public has to protest against the abuse of the concerto.

The caprices of fashion which from time to time have raised up rivals for the violin—the hurdy-gurdy (*vielle*) and the bagpipes (*musette*) about 1730, the harp after 1750—could oppose no obstacle to the successes of Guignon, of Anet, of Gaviniès or Viotti.

With Paganini, in the nineteenth century, the art of violin playing was to reach the apogee of a glory which seems now to be on the decline. The marvellous development of the orchestra, the more and more polyphonic turn of mind of contemporary composers, a more difficult style of writing, gradually embracing all the instruments, making of each player a but modestly disguised soloist, a tendency (the reaction against the romantic attitude, or the social instinct of equality?) to repudiate the superiority of an individual over the ensemble—and still more, the insupportable vacuity of most of the concertos, all this tends to the suppression, pure and simple, of the mere violin virtuoso. There is no indication, however, that this must of necessity be detrimental to music for the violin.

(Translated by Ottomar King.)

<sup>1</sup>*Mercure de France*. August, 1738; p. 1722.

# AN "INSTRUMENTAL" ÆSTHETICS OF MUSIC<sup>1</sup>

By HOWARD MARKEL

## I

**W**E hear much about the "creative" in our day. Until recently to create meant to produce significantly: God created the world, the artist created his paintings and fugues, the inventor created. It was a term reserved for the select few who were blessed with the gift for innovation. But to-day we have succeeded in delegating something of the divine fire to all of humanity; we have discovered a reason for the special dignity—so we choose to call it—that attaches to the species man: it is the ability to create. And not merely a few of us can create, but every man, if he will, if he is given the chance. So it is that we now conceive that to live well is synonymous with the indulgence of the creative faculty. Let each man produce his own salvation, for he has it in him. And we go on to speak of creative intelligence, creative industry, creative criticism, even creative evolution. Every man his own artist.

Suppose we carry the notion over to æsthetics, the field of the beautiful. The implication is obvious. In the observation of what is beautiful one does not, and certainly should not, passively receive impressions, inhaling beauty as one inhales air. What occurs is that this beautiful thing becomes part of experience, and is interpreted with the whole of experience as background. In addition to receiving, one creates. Theory recognizes this creative æsthetics that is native with every man when it speaks of "Einfühlung." We have sound psychological proof of its existence. It makes the observer or hearer almost as important to the art as the artist. The artist proper produces something, but it rests with others to give that sympathetic response, to experience that "Einfühlung," that justifies calling a piece of work beautiful. The artist lends his ability, the reciprocant his interpretation. Both create.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The term instrumental is employed in the title and throughout the article in the same sense that an instrumental (or social) philosophy employs it, such, for example, as John Dewey's. It involves investigation for the sake of something—here the musical public.

<sup>2</sup>The "Einfühlung" theory is dealt with later.

But when the creative faculty—(psychologically still a very blurred thing)—is spoken of, as it is so much to-day, it is always implied that it is something to develop, that man should make much more use of this potential ability. Why? Because it will give interest to living, because it will be *instrumental* in making life less one-colored. That is just what æsthetics should do. It should make conscious that part of the creative faculty that concerns itself with the contemplation of the beautiful, especially in the arts. It should serve the arts. It should be *instrumental* in establishing a sound appreciation of the arts. Appreciation. That is the important thing. Once it is conceded that contemplation of the beautiful helps make life worth living, let æsthetics, as the science of the beautiful, proceed to foster its appreciation. Then we shall have an instrumental æsthetics.

## II

Nowhere is this more necessary than in music. Not only is there not a sufficiently widespread interest in it. That is perhaps true of all the arts, though the revival seems to be setting in. But what music suffers much from, in contrast to the other arts, is the poor and dilettantish quality of much of the interest in it. One need but attend any recital given to discover how unreal, and certainly uneducated, the interest of many concert-goers is. Sincerity is the crying need in music appreciation. It is not necessary to assert dogmatically this is good and that is bad music. But it is absolutely necessary to have every listener call beautiful only what appeals to him as such. That is the first task of an instrumental æsthetics in music: to make the response native and personal. Hypocrisy excludes appreciation.

The pitiful thing is that even those people who are musically quite sound and capable of preaching true doctrine rarely succeed in doing so, and the failure is always due either to the poverty of *method* or the poverty of *conception*. First, method. Too often we do find just that positive statement of good and bad the chief method of making the amateur familiar with the art. No one can object to the expression of æsthetic enthusiasm: too many of us know what a stimulant it is to find it in a more gifted friend. This "transfer of emotion" is perhaps the greatest aid to appreciation that exists; the sympathy and honesty of this emotion is exactly what is desired. No, enthusiasm never did any harm. The great objection is to the attempt to transfer æsthetic opinions in the same manner that one makes known the law, so that the



novice goes into the concert-hall with the feeling that "This is Beethoven," "This is Mozart"; "That's good music." It is the sincerity that is missing, and before long it develops into chronic hypocrisy, with the result that the person and the art suffer—the person by wasting time, the art by a coquettish love. Such may be the evils of method.

It has been plain to many ever since Gurney published his "Power of Sound" that the only legitimate method must have for its precepts psychological fact. If experimental psychology has taught anything, it is how much can be learned by careful observation. And we are fast realizing that a psychological *æsthetics*, a true "science" of beauty, has more to teach in the few, but enlightening, facts collected than in all the theorizing that has been done since Plato. Obviously, these *facts* must be the groundwork of the instrumental *æsthetics*, and not mere statements in praise of music. It is very well to speak of divine harmony and the music of the spheres, but there are so many who do not appreciate even the earthly harmonies.

Not only do we find the method of teaching music often very poor, but also a false conception of the nature of the art. Conception—what one believes music is—is even more important than method. It is here, of course, that *æsthetic* theory comes most directly into play, since its purpose is to discover what is beautiful and appealing in an art. When it is ascertained why music makes its appeal, and what distinguishes beautiful from not-beautiful, we shall be in a better way to use that knowledge to further appreciation. At present we must make use of the very promising hints psychological study has yielded. One distinct fruit of that study we have already: the importance of form in all art, which is only gradually penetrating musical theory, and which permits no excuse for the erroneous conception so often found of the nature of music.

What is that misconception? But first let us go into detail about what music is, what it is made up of, what its technical and formal equipment is. Then it will be clearer what it is not.

### III

When we consider that music as we know it goes back scarcely further than the sixteenth century, it is not so surprising that that question is still being asked. And when we consider the strange, mystical answers that have been made to it, as we shall later, it becomes one's duty to ask it. What is wanted is not a

rhapsody, a prose poem on the art—what most descriptions of music are—but a definition, an analysis. A definition that explains, not eulogizes; that scientifically analyses the elements of music; that is psychological and physiological, not pathological. We want to know what music is and what its appeal is. Such a definition must contain two things: that which is intrinsic in the art, and that which enables one to appreciate it; in other words, the make-up of music itself, and the make-up of the listener and composer who derive pleasure from it. In fact, knowing what it is that appeals to the intelligent listener, to the intelligent composer, is a fairly certain way of finding what is significant in music itself. It is not flattery to indicate the vast importance of the listener to the art. It is a question if he is not as influential in shaping the art of the composer. Though even the composer is nothing more than the ideal listener, who has listened so well that his interest overflows into creation.

What is there, then, inherent in the nature of music that might appeal? First, it is plain that music, like poetry or painting, is a form of expression. It is an organized way of saying something, and the organization, or **FORM**, is as important as the "something," or subject-matter, or **EXPRESSION**. Consider these separately:

Music differs from a sound as a scream differs from speech. Just as speech is noise with a purpose, music is noise with an idea behind it. It is this idea that gives the form and organization. A scream means something, but it might mean anything. A good speech, like good music, means something very definite, though a musical idea is very different from the ideas we use in ordinary life.

These musical ideas are at the basis of musical form, and are the only part of form that is inspirational. Just as the single line must come to the poet, containing the rhythm and idea of the poem it will take him many hours to expand, so the beginning of a fleeting Schumann mood, of a Debussy atmosphere, of a Brahms symphony, of a Strauss story, must be the minute, but potentially pregnant musical ideas we find in these compositions. Only this idea, this inspiration, is by the grace of God; the remainder is by the labor of man. But, as indicated, the few notes that make up the idea are all-important, since they are the starting point of the entire composition. The single line in poetry gave the thought and rhythm; the few notes give the thought (or mood) and rhythm and material out of which the rest develops.

As to the nature of this musical idea, it is often what is known as a motive or theme. It is a combination of tones, and nothing

more. Taken for what it is—a group of tones—it need mean nothing outside itself. It is intrinsically good or bad. There is no reason why one should not be capable to pass judgment on a musical idea just as it is done on a mental idea. One is a group of words, the other, of notes, and in judging the latter we should be able to feel its essential goodness or badness as surely as the other, after sufficient experience with such ideas. Although we shall feel the musical judgment almost entirely instinctively, as a question of appeal or no appeal, whereas the other calls forth reasons for like or dislike. But the important thing is that themes and motives are the ideas of music, and in passing judgment we are justified in considering nothing but the music itself. That may seem very obvious, but when we hear musicians say condescendingly: "Oh, that's programme music," as though to relegate it to the primitive stage of musical society, the necessity to emphasize that music *is music* is plain. The good musician does not condemn ragtime because it is popular, but because its musical ideas are so uninspired and insignificant and empty, usually. He feels that instinctively. He is musically intelligent. Which does not imply that he is intelligent in other things, that he is as capable of judging any idea as he is of judging a musical one. We have but to refer to music biography to appreciate how unintelligent the lives of the majority—yes, the majority—of great musicians were, contrasted with the Greek and usual ideal of a full and rational life. We see men like Mozart and Schubert who knew very little of any world but the musical, and not all of that; like Beethoven, to whom dispassionate contemplation of social affairs was a form of anemia, who must needs explode about a thing or not think of it at all, who produced a cry of triumph when Napoleon appeared as the saviour of peoples, and went into a fit of rage when he was made emperor. After all, the Moussorgskys, the Cuis, the Borodines, who can produce an army, a bridge or a chemical discovery as well as good music, are rare. And perhaps the other type breeds better music. Even Wagner, for long proclaimed great musician, philosopher and poet, sounds to many now commonplace in his poetry and crude in his philosophy. No, be it remembered, musical intelligence does not imply social intelligence. All of which is by way of showing how absolutely the two kinds of ideas, the artistic and the every-day mental one, are unrelated.

It is important to remember that these musical ideas may be conceived horizontally or vertically, that is, melodically or harmonically. For example, the opening of the Siegfried funeral

dirge in "Götterdämmerung" is effective harmonically, but Schubert's "Hark, hark, the Lark!" is a melody. In a composition there may be one or many of these ideas. Work like the Chopin prelude has one, while the sonata, overture and symphony have many.

These ideas—to repeat—are the inspirations of music, the raw material (not forgetting that each of us has heard such as were quite uninspired). A good musical idea cannot be manufactured any more than an impressive painting or lyric. It is upon these ideas that the composer builds. He is not—as I remember once reading about Beethoven's anything but "Moonlight" sonata—of a sudden struck with a sonata or symphony, whereupon he rushes to a piano and plays the entire thing through, or stays up the whole night jotting it down on paper. Composition was never so simple, as one who has tried will tell. Was it Brahms who said that he carried themes about in his head for months, even years, and only then set to work to make full compositions of them? But the classic example is Beethoven and his sketch books, in which he would put down musical thoughts as they came to him, wherever he was. It was after he had these that the work began. Sir George Grove says of him that there is hardly a bar in his music that cannot be said to have been rewritten at least a dozen times. It was in the working out of the original thoughts that form was developed. These thoughts were the elements of form. Form need be defined as nothing more than the working out of these ideas in accordance with the principles of all art (if not all living), of *unity*, which gives the composition a definite thesis, and *variety*, which prevents it from becoming monotonous. That is obvious in the simplest rondo and the most subtle symphony. And the genius of the composer is shown in this architectural side of music as much as in the purely inspirational. Once we follow his method of handling his musical ideas we are studying form, and if Tolstoy in "What is Art?" had attempted this he might have found Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, Brahms and Strauss less the "mixture of strange loud sounds," from which one "receives no clear impression." Much as may be said about sonata, minuet, rondo, scherzo, etc., forms, or of canons and fugues, we are only illustrating in different ways that form is the presentation of musical ideas. So much for form.

But we said music was also expression.<sup>1</sup> Whereas form is objective and we can see the workings, expression is subjective

<sup>1</sup>It should be clear that by "expression" is meant here emotion in the concrete, like love, etc. The opinion of Henry James and so many others that "art is expression" is justified, since it only means that all art has something to say.

and individual. By giving the creative faculties free play, music becomes expressive. Though the development of the form of a composition is deliberate work, yet it becomes fascinating work because it does give the opportunity for expression. It becomes its own compensation. An unalloyed example of this working with musical ideas is the Bach fugue, a sort of syllogistic reasoning in music, where one might think the process so obvious and mathematical as to lack appeal. But what sophisticated (musically only!) listener can hear even so simple a thing as the second fugue in the Well-Tempered Clavichord without feeling something of the delight it must have given the composer to create? Another example of the expressiveness of even the strictest musical forms is the liking all the great composers have shown for the theme and variation. In the so-called classicists we might expect it, but even the romanticists (also so-called), like Schubert in the fine *andante* to the second sonata, or Schumann in the Symphonic Studies, and a modern like d'Indy, are attracted to it. Which examples show that form does not mean formalism, but organized expression.

This expressive quality may become more definite. That is, work may be inspired by some particular state of the composer, like love, reflection or anger. However, though this particular state may be the starting point, it does not signify that the composition *means* love, reflection or anger. It *means* nothing but music, though it may *suggest* anything. But more of this later. At present it is only necessary to establish that, in distinction from music whose cause for creation is a love of music—which we feel to be true of all of Bach and much of Beethoven, and surely of Mozart—there is that which has a more personal quality for the composer and is connected with emotions and moods, such as the Beethoven sonata "Les Adieux," the Schumann "Fantasiestücke," the Schubert songs, Wagner's leading motives, Liszt's "Les Préludes," d'Indy's "Jour d'été à la Montagne," or Debussy's "l'Après-midi d'un Faune." All these latter, besides their musical content, may suggest other things.

Then again, expression may become so concrete and precise as to try to tell a story in music, to follow a programme, and if we wish to know what the music is about, we must know the story. We must know the fiery tale of Francesca, the stories that filled a thousand and one nights, the eventful Heldenleben, the pranks of Till Eulenspiegel, or the midsummer night's dream. Or we must know what a pastoral scene is like, what a "fête" and a "carnaval" are, how a thunderstorm sounds.

Thus may we distinguish between pure, emotional, and detailed expression, though there has been scarcely a composer who has not known all three to inspire him.

#### IV

Knowing these two elements, form and expression, which differentiate music from mere sound or noise, and for which the artist works, the question arises: What and why is their appeal? That we find these elements in all composition is sufficient proof that they do appeal. But why? It is this question that psychological aesthetics deals with, and the answer is still anything but complete. Yet some very interesting possibilities have come to light. Why musical form should have so definite an appeal is satisfactorily hinted at, while the answer to why the expressive power of music should be so great is somewhat vague and uncertain.

As explaining the attraction of beautiful forms, the "Einfühlung" theory of Lipps has received much recognition in psychological aesthetics. It is outside the scope of this paper to inquire into that theory minutely.<sup>1</sup> The action of *Einfühlung*, of inner sympathy, of a literal "rising with the cathedral spires we are looking at," of the circling of the horizon, etc., seems quite a sound explanation of the attraction of various visible forms. That is, it does seem we are very active while looking at a beautiful landscape or a fine portrait, even if we seem to be doing nothing but looking on. It is this activity that breeds admiration or dissatisfaction. As Vernon Lee states it: "The sense of form is the active perception of spatial relations."<sup>2</sup>

It is easy to see the application of such a theory to visible form. But if this definition is to be carried over to audible form, which we have in music, we must establish the spatial element in music. When we say, on turning a page of piano music we are reading at sight, and after playing the last note on the page: "I wonder where that note goes," are we not talking spatially? Melodies do go up and down, or, in the language of visible forms, have height and depth, while the third musical dimension is provided by harmony.<sup>3</sup> So, if we are willing to accept this translated terminology, we have a very logical explanation of the appeal of form in music based on the *Einfühlung* theory.

<sup>1</sup>It is presented as well as anywhere in Vernon Lee's little book: *The Beautiful*.

<sup>2</sup>Contemporary Review, 1904.

<sup>3</sup>The foregoing is the theory of Dauriac.



How it is that music is able to express, to suggest emotional feeling, so that the composer, emotionally moved, writes music under its inspiration, and the listener, hearing notes, may have particular emotions, even certain concrete experiences, suggested to him, has not been so logically determined. There is no doubt that this suggestion does exist. In discussing the expressional element in music, we saw that it can at times be very definite, as when it tries to tell a story. That mere notes can portray in that way is a remarkable thing, and constitutes the baffling character of music. Of course, there is nothing remarkable about the mere imitation of natural sounds: the rushing up and down of the high strings and woodwind, over a rhythmically confused bass and persistent tympani, easily produces a thunderstorm, even a Beethoven pastoral thunderstorm; or the gasping breath of a dying man as in "Tod und Verklärung" is suggested without trouble rhythmically; or the "Jeux d'Eau," with its sensuous gurgling, through harmonies; or the crowing of the cock in Rimsky's opera; or the feeling of "Warum" produced by an upward inflection, as of the voice. These are not remarkable, because they are only imitations, repetitions of the same sound, although they are very well done, and very effective. But that we should feel the strut and dignity of "Ein Heldenleben," that we should speak of themes of love and hate, that we find compositions named *Aufschwung*, *Sonata Tragica*, *Eroica Symphony*, *Nuages*; that is the puzzling thing. This is not imitation, but an expression in sound of what even speech finds hard to say.

The advance of psychology and physiology will undoubtedly throw much light on this problem. It has already given very interesting hypotheses. We know, for example, that sound has a more immediate and unconscious effect on the senses than any other stimulus. There are many things the eye can see calmly, which will strike a note of terror when a shriek is added. It seems that there is an intimate connection between the aural nerves and the central nervous system, which would account for the uncontrollable effect sound can have on the nerves. Mere sound is a stimulant and makes the listener susceptible, so to speak. But to what? To the "emotional memory," as it has been called. By the emotional memory is meant the retention, from concrete emotional experiences, of the accompaniments of such experiences. For example, emotion is usually accompanied by a hastened pulse, a rush of blood, a choked breathing, and other bodily changes, probably very complicated. The essence of these bodily changes—their physical basis—is motion, as is suggested in the terms

rush, quickened and breathing. And the physical basis of music is sound in motion, as evidenced by the pace—or rate of speed—and rhythm, or regulated motion. Since these emotions consist of motion, and music consists of motion, we have possibly a reason why the latter can suggest the former. In addition, music exposes the senses through the stimulating action of sound, Sound gives the “nervous sensitiveness,” while rhythm and pace give the emotional suggestions. This theory can be taken for what it is worth. It is at least an opening.<sup>1</sup>

## V

Now, we have discussed what music is, and what its appeal is, with suggestions why it appeals, all with the avowed intention of proving how it is often misconceived. And again we ask: What is that misconception? It has been illustrated so often in the writings of various people that it would be best presented by quoting from them. First, there is the opinion of the ordinary man of letters:

Music is the only sensual gratification mankind may indulge in. . . .  
—(Addison)

Music forces me to forget myself and my true state; it transports me to some other state which is not mine. . . . (The Kreutzer Sonata, Tolstoi.)

We might note the remarkable rightness of this from De Quincey:

Music is an intellectual or a sensual pleasure according to the temperament of him who hears it.

Or this from Boswell:

I told him (Johnson) that it (music) affected me to such a degree as often to agitate my nerves painfully, producing . . . pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears, and daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest part of the battle. “Sir,” said he, “I should never hear it if it made me such a fool.”

Perhaps these men can be forgiven, having no intimate connection with the art. Then there are the poets:

What passion cannot music raise and quell?—(Dryden)

<sup>1</sup>The foregoing is a combination of psychological theories presented by Vernon Lee in the article mentioned before. The part motion plays in music and emotion seems correctly analyzed, but whether the interaction of the two can be deduced from this is a question.

Herrick calls "To Music, to Becalm His Fever," to

Charm me asleep and melt me so  
With thy delicious numbers,  
That, being ravished, hence I go  
Away in easy slumbers.

If music is the food of love, play on.—(*Shakespeare*)

We might add Swinburne, Shelley, and countless others (though we should hesitate long at Milton and Browning). But Plato proved long ago what an irresponsible lot poets are. There are also the philosophers, with whom we associate æsthetic feeling more or less. The following is a quotation from Santayana, taken in preference to the numerous æstheticians because it is contemporary and well put:

There is perhaps no emotion incident to human life that music cannot render in its abstract medium by suggesting the pang of it. . . . The passions, as music renders them, are general. . . . A thousand shades of sadness and mirth find in music their distinct expression. . . . Thus music is a means of giving form to our inner feelings. It makes the dumb speak, and plucks from the animal heart potentialities of expression which render it even more than human.

All these foregoing might be excused on the ground that music never penetrated very far into them, and was not one of the necessities of life for them. But what shall we say when musicians blunder about their art, when Wagner says:

The organ of the emotions is sound, its intentionally æsthetic language is music.

and Bach:

The result (of playing figured bass) is an agreeable harmony to the glory of God and justifiable gratification of the senses; for the sole end . . . of all music should be pleasant recreation.

We can only say that they were too tied up with it, that music was too much with them, which is quite proper if it produces such glorious work.

All these opinions of music would be well enough when applied to the art in its primitive state, which was little more than rhythm, relieved sometimes by a touch of melody to avoid monotony. To-day, when we use it to keep a regiment in step, or to mark the time of the dance, it reverts in a sense to its primitive condition. (Remember, however, there is nothing derogatory in this, since it only proves the strong rhythmic sense present in every man.) Just

as primitive music proved the rhythmic capacity, Greek music, if the little we know of it is true, proved its expressional capacity with the use of the modes, expressing severity, love and sorrow.

But music has come far from both of these. There is no denying the expressive power of music. As we have seen, that is one very important element of music. The fallacy lies in conceiving that as being all that the art has to give, which it most emphatically is not. The above opinions and definitions are only half truths. Music is *organized* expression—expression plus form, and unless we concede this we deny the dignity of the art, which lies in the intelligent use made of the musical ideas. If music were merely emotional expression, it would seem only necessary to lie back and absorb it in a semi-conscious state, instead of following closely what is said. Well, the point is, it is no more possible to do that and know what it is all about than it is to listen only to the measured beat and smooth flow of the syllables of a fine poem. Both cases exhibit that mood so well described by Santayana as the "lazy freedom of reverie," the "drowsy reverie relieved by nervous thrills." A Beethoven symphony requires no less attention than "Paradise Lost."

But, you say: "Who does not know that?" And the answer is: "No matter how many know it, there are few enough who act on it." Take, for example, the ancient controversy carried on by the best of musicians about the relative merits of classical, romantic and programme music. How often is the statement made after a hearing of Strauss, Debussy and many others, even music like Schumann's sometimes, that it is nice and pleasing, but of course it is not as high a form of art as pure music, so called, because it has a name or tells a story. In other words, while they realize it is wrong to *like* a piece of music only because of the story it tells, they cannot see that it is just as wrong to *dislike* it merely because it tells a story. Musical puritanism is about as obnoxious as any other kind. They appreciate as little as the amateur that the story is only incidental, that music must be judged on a musical basis, that they are listening to music and not a fairytale. It is about as sensible as saying that an idea is not an idea unless it appears in a philosophical work. How incidental the title or story of a composition is should be clear if we listen to the composition without knowing the story and try to discover it from hearing. Could anyone see the "Reflets dans l'Eau" or the bustling, strutting hero of "Heldenleben" without ever knowing they were supposed to be there? Obviously not. Any theme is liable to suggest anything. If we are to judge music as music,

the only thing it is necessary to consider is the quality of the musical ideas, and the use that is made of them.

If we would be further convinced that music is seldom enough taken as such, let us go into any concert-hall. It is probably true that you will invariably find two kinds of listeners: those who insist on being thrilled every now and then, and those whose interest is in what is being played. The first type uses the music for a romantic recollection of past experience or somnolent day-dreaming, which quite forgets the music and is disturbed only in time to applaud—to applaud, it would seem, their own aimless wanderings, since they have not heard the music. These feelings are anything but æsthetic; such a person is as likely to be moved by a cheap waltz as a Tschaikowsky love passage. They never reach that disinterested interest which is the basis of all æsthetic feeling and the life of the art. If our analysis of music into form and expression holds good, if the importance lies in the kind and use of the musical ideas, to which they give no attention, they are missing the only real thrill that can be had. And what a thrill it is anyone will testify who has followed with amazement the perfect work of a great symphony or the perfect quartet. Not only does unmusical enjoyment deprive the listener of the best, but it also injures the art by the application of unintelligent standards. The history of music is almost entirely a history of maltreated genius. None of the arts has punished its innovators more; none has honored its mediocrities more. To be original was to be condemned. And always because unintelligent listeners or bigoted critics refused to see music as a thing of ideas. The listener did not—does not—even hear the ideas, and the critic would not, because the way they were set did not agree with past performances, as though there were a law of form as inviolable as that of gravitation. Between a false conservatism and a mistaken emotionalism music has suffered much, to say nothing of starving, weary genius.

## VI

It still suffers, and it will be the work of an instrumental æsthetics to relieve it through the teaching of better doctrine. As æsthetic theory is constituted now, it is wholly incapable of refining or inducing appreciation. It may be interesting to discuss categories, to try to find where the beautiful ends and the sublime begins, but it is also futile. It would seem a much better thing to direct the æsthetic proclivities of that vast majority which finds

beauty somewhere, without distinguishing between the sublime, the tragic, the comic or the grotesque. It seeks beauty, and not categories. An instrumental theory must admit first that the sense of beauty is one of the most useful things we possess, and must then proceed to cultivate it. There is no reason why the school-teacher should not have as definite and psychologically sound a method for teaching what is beautiful as for teaching, let us say, arithmetic. At present the interest a child may take in painting, music or drama is self-attained and undirected by any school training. If we admit the use of beauty we also admit the necessity for teaching it. The three "R's" should be expanded to include Art. And the æsthetician should study beauty having in mind what should be taught about it and how. That will be his contribution to a life worth living.

Not the least part of that contribution will be a finer appreciation of music. The present writer not only had no fundamental teaching in the essentials of good music throughout his elementary school career, lasting through twelve years, but cannot even recall having heard a piece of good music played in the school in all that time. (That in the "great" city of New York, too!) There were "music classes" where silly scales and songs were sung, and notes and peculiar signs copied from the blackboard, after which it was surprising that any interest in music was retained. In fact, there was a complete loss of interest until quite accidentally a good orchestra was heard for the first time in a good program, and a miracle had been performed for the world of sound as great as any the world of sight had known.

But to stumble on an art is a dangerous method of approach for the stumbler and the art. Æsthetics must present the opportunity for a long acquaintance and a pleasant one. But first it must know where the true beauty of music lies. We have tried to show in this essay where that beauty is: in the form-perception, as in all art, and not in the incidental emotional suggestions; and that these form-perceptions imply the use of musical ideas, a kind of intelligence distinct from any applied in the visible world. Nor is there any reason why intelligence cannot be achieved in this as in all things.

It is time for the musician to cease debating classicism, romanticism, and modernism, and to talk music.



## IS THE MARSEILLAISE A GERMAN COMPOSITION?

(The History of a Hoax)

By EDGAR ISTEL

*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas.*

IT is pleasant that even in the midst of the frightful world-war more agreeable episodes happened. If a man thinks that he has to do with a fact of world history, and his discovery reveals itself finally as a horrible swindle, then all of us of whatever nation, without prejudice, will rejoice at the remarkable occurrence.

On July 14, 1915, the bones of Rouget de Lisle, the poet and composer of the *Marseillaise*, were carried in state from Choisy-le-Roi to the Invalides in Paris. There they were given a provisional place until a special statute makes possible their removal to the Panthéon. On June 14, four weeks before this historical memorial, there appeared in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, one of the greatest and most influential of German papers, an article by the celebrated writer Alexander Moszkowski which seriously represented poor Rouget de Lisle a plagiarist; the text of the *Marseillaise* came, it said, "from several passages in Racine's tragedies," the melody was nothing else than a "forgotten church chant from the German side of the Bodensee."

The tone of Moszkowski's article may be seen from the fact that he compared this world-shaking discovery at least to a victory by General Hindenburg; in fact, if Herr Moszkowski (who, by the way, was born in Pilica, Poland) had established that the French national hymn had been stolen from Germany, he might have had a chance to see his name immortalized among the great discoverers, like Columbus.

But unfortunately the joy of Herr Moszkowski was short. I wrote a little article in answer to his, in which I showed in a few words that his whole story was a swindle. This refutation was accepted by the editors, but its publication was, in spite of my urgent reminders, delayed. Were they afraid of the truth? were they unwilling to incur the reproaches of their readers? Finally

I was requested to be so good as to withdraw my article from publication, since it was not in accordance with national interest to glorify Rouget de Lisle; also I was reminded that Herr Moszkowski had a brother living in Paris (a naturalized Frenchman, the composer Moritz Moszkowski) and that my article might cause him unpleasantness. I answered that it was in any case more to the national interest bravely to spread the truth abroad than to let a lie go uncontradicted; and that if the French didn't know who composed the *Marseillaise*, then my authentic article would do the Parisian Herr Moszkowski less harm than his brother's, which was based on fantasy. It was truly a stiff battle. They asked me at least to permit a counter explanation by Herr Moszkowski as conclusion of my article; against that I made no objection, but I refused under any circumstances to give up my right to the publication of the article which had been accepted. Finally, precisely on July 14, my article appeared. To my astonishment the editors omitted the name of Herr Moszkowski and there was no answer from him!

Truly it was a shame that good Herr Moszkowski should have such luck. His article showed such persuasive clarity, that I myself might perhaps have believed him literally, had I not already, in my studies, gained so intimate a knowledge of the subject. Thus writes Moszkowski:

*A Modest Home of a Musician at Meersburg on the Bodensee.*

A century and a half ago there lived at the court of an electoral prince a prosperous choirmaster named Holtzmann. He was a copious composer of church music, and then more church music, of which none at all ever reached the outside world. The music has vanished away, and according to the probabilities of musical history, nothing of value was lost with his Chorals, his Motets and his Glorias. But one day, when he was writing still another Credo, he had luck. Struck by an isolated flash of genius, he put on his paper a melody which soared above the commonplaces of municipal music. This melody of Holtzmann's, composed for the Church, intended for the edification of the good people of Meersburg, is—one pinches oneself as one writes it—is the *Marseillaise*.

Doesn't it sound like a pretty fairy tale, that begins with the words "Once upon a time"? Well, it is only a fairy tale, for—I, too, like Herr Moszkowski, pinch myself as I write it down—this Kapellmeister Holtzmann never existed at all and his alleged *Credo* is a falsification.

"I like," says Goethe's Faust, "to expound the whole text." Let us examine these circumstances *ab ovo*.

As a matter of fact, the *Marseillaise* was composed, words and music, by Rouget de Lisle at Strasbourg on the night of April 24-25, 1792. It was printed by Dannbach in Strasbourg on a loose sheet, without the author's name, under the title *Chant de guerre pour l'armée du Rhin* (only later did it receive the name *Marche des Marseillais*). Immediately after, the assertion was made that Rouget was not the author. We can point to testimony that is beyond question to show that there is no truth in the accusation. Grétry writes in his *Mémoires ou Essais sur la musique*, Paris, year V (that is, 1797, in a note in the third volume which bears the date Sept., 1794):

The *Marseillaise* is ascribed to me and to all those who have furnished it with an accompaniment. The author of this song, of the melody as well as the verses, was the citizen Rouget de Lisle. He sent me his hymn "Allons, enfants de la patrie" from Strasbourg, where he then lived, six months before it was known in Paris. According to his wish, I had copies made and distributed."

Thus is the authorship of Rouget, in so far as other contemporary *French* composers or poets could call it in question, unassailably established. In the lifetime of Rouget, who lived forty years after the composition of his most famous work, no one ventured to contest the authorship with him. Thus he was able to say truthfully when he first printed it over his name in the year 1825 in a definitive edition which is a sort of musical testament (the *Marseillaise* is number 23 of his *Fifty Songs*): "I wrote the words and air of this song at Strasbourg, the night of the proclamation of war at the end of April, 1792."

In 1842 the story first appeared that the *Marseillaise* was of German origin. Amédée Rouget de Lisle, the nephew of the composer, in a pamphlet (appearing in 1865, of which only 100 copies were printed, now extraordinarily rare) *La vérité sur la paternité de la Marseillaise*, mentioned a version which had cropped up in a Carlsruhe paper. The Carlsruhe legend rests on an unauthentic note in the *Chronique de Paris* for August 29, 1792, wherein the words indeed were ascribed to Rouget, but the music was said to have been composed by a certain "Allemand." This name "Allemand" the Carlsruhe writer turned into "Deutschen" (German), but the learned Alsatian Georg Kastner in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale* for March 26 and April 18, 1848, clearly exposed the mistake. It was Kastner, too, who reduced to silence the further accusations of plagiarism brought by Castil-Blaze and by Fétis. Since Fétis adduces no German composer, I will pass over his

remarks here. Of more weight is Castil-Blaze, who affirms the *Marseillaise* to be of German origin. Thus Moszkowski writes:

Castil-Blaze, the most universal [?] among French musical critics, gives in the *Revue Musicale* for July 18, 1852, [?] proof that the melody is German, a song with chorus and refrain, which was first heard in 1782 at the house of Mme. Montesson, the wife of the Duke of Orléans. This French assertion was firmly established beyond all doubt [!] by an archæological find on German ground: the musician Fridolin Hamma, city-organist at Meersburg, discovered in 1861 the manuscript of a *Missa solennis* by Holtzmann, and this manuscript established the fact that Rouget de Lisle not only used the Credo of this mass for his text but that he copied it note for note.

One thing is already clear to the unprejudiced reader. How can a "song with chorus and refrain" be "established firmly beyond all doubt" by the Credo of any Mass whatsoever? Simple logic says there is some inconsistency. But I shall show that the assertions of Castil-Blaze are not corroborated in the least by the so-called Mass by Holtzmann.

In the first place, I find in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, number 51, for the year 1847 a postscript to the Parisian's statement, by Dr. F. S. Bamberg, to the effect that Castil-Blaze repeatedly made requests that he might be informed of evidence in Germany that the *Marseillaise* was made from a German song. That would at this moment certainly be interesting, for the discussion about the origin of the *Marseillaise* had again become a matter of interest on account of the narrative in Lamartine's *Girondists*. To these open questions there appeared but one answer (number 3, 1848). This answer came from Karl Gaillard, a friend of Richard Wagner's, then editor of the *Berliner Musikalische Zeitung*. Gaillard said, "*Without being able in the least to vouch for the truth of the statements*" that he had heard from older people in Berlin, that when the *Marseillaise* was first heard in Berlin, people were surprised to recognize in it a German song already known there. As authors of this German hymn were credited the poet Forster and the composer Reichardt; they were both known for their enthusiasm for the French Republic. This German text, said Gaillard, was later published together with the French by Rellstab in Berlin.

It is particularly remarkable that not a single copy either of Forster's poem or Reichardt's composition has been discovered up to this time. I surmise that the following is at the base of the rumor. In some way, Forster got the text of the *Marseillaise* sooner than anybody else and set himself to making a translation of it; since the first copies had only one air with no accompaniment, Reichardt (especially as the cause appealed to him) had only to

prepare the accompaniment, and thereby he got the reputation of being the composer, just as Grétry had done. That people in Berlin who knew this German setting before the original French form might have taken it for the original, is easily to be seen.

It is harder to explain how Castil-Blaze, who in 1847 knew nothing about the alleged German origin of the *Marseillaise*, could a few years later make the statements quoted by Moszkowski. He repeated them in his book *Molière musicien* in 1852. They are also to be found in Anatole Loquin's *Les mélodies populaires de la France*, page 113, where the older French claims about the *Marseillaise* are discussed in the light of the *weightiest* documents. Loquin also dismissed as untenable the statements of Castil-Blaze, and a few years later Fétis, in his discussion with Kastner, could not adduce them. It is enough to add that Castil-Blaze's own son, Blaze de Bury, in his book *Musiciens du passé* (published in 1880) does not agree with his father's theory. How Castil-Blaze juggled with the truth may be seen from a few of his notes; he wrote: "For half a century the German papers had been advertising their *Marseillaise*; Rouget de Lisle was still living and I did not wish to tell what I knew." Thus, Castil-Blaze, who, five years before, had openly inquired in Germany whether it were true that the *Marseillaise* had its origin there and had received an answer not very gratifying to his own opinion, now acted as if he had already known the truth in Rouget's lifetime. That the "German papers had advertised their *Marseillaise* for half a century" cannot be supported by a single instance.

It is of course not impossible, though there is no proof, that some German folk-tune in some form may resemble the *Marseillaise*, or that Rouget de Lisle may have heard some such tune in Strasbourg. But how little one may draw conclusions from such resemblances to popular tunes Wilhelm Tappert has shown in his essays *Wandernde Melodien* (2nd edition, Berlin, 1880); he even gives a striking illustration from the *Marseillaise*. Beyond a doubt one line in the *Marseillaise* (*Contre nous de la tyrannie*, etc.) sounds literally like a passage in the German Choral *Der goldenen Sonne Licht und Pracht*: yet it appears, as Tappert rightly shows, as a phrase which is a musical commonplace and nobody's property; he further shows that such a sequence of tones may be found in French folk-music as well as in German, that it has been taken over in classic music (Mozart's *Bandl-Terzett*). On the other hand, the German *Song of Rinaldo*, which in part is identical with the beginning of the *Marseillaise*, was certainly composed after it, since the novel *Rinaldo Rinaldini* by Goethe's brother-in-law

Vulpius, from which the words of the song come, first came out in 1800. There is a similar explanation for the story given by R. F. Meyer (*Versailler Briefe*, Berlin, 1872); he tells of a song from Upper-Bavaria, *Stand ich auf hohen Bergen*, which was sung in 1842 by an old lady of seventy years, the melody of which went back to her grandmother's time, and which was said to be very similar to the *Marseillaise*.

Tappert, whose manuscript notes relating to the *Marseillaise* I have examined in his papers in the Berlin Royal Library, has also striking contributions to make to the clearing up of the Hamma-Holtzmann case. I emphasize this especially because Tappert (who was a man of great wisdom and colossal industry, an intimate and valued friend of Wagner, who fell into dire want as a result of an unsuccessful suit) after his death suffered from such contempt in Berlin that any ignorant journalist did not hesitate openly to abuse his views—a state of affairs of which I was to get a taste in the course of my controversy.

And now at last to my main theme, the *Credo* of the "Hofkapellmeister Holtzmann." No man had any inkling of this epoch-making musician or of his work until suddenly in 1861 there appeared in number 16 of the *Gartenlaube*, one of the foremost family magazines of the time, an article bearing the arresting title: *The Marseillaise composed by a German*. The article was signed J. B. Hamma. In truth, the author who is famed only for this one short article was named Fridolin Hamma. According to Schubert's musical *Konversationslexicon* (1871) Hamma was born in 1818 in Friedingen on the Donau (Württemberg), was Music-director in Schaffhausen, then official organist in Meersburg on the Bodensee; in 1871 he was music-director and principal of a music-school in Neustadt (Palatinate); he died sometime in his eightieth year, the exact date not being ascertainable. Let us see now what Hamma has to tell us. I will leave out all superfluous matter.

The hymn of the Revolution, known under the name of the *Marseillaise*, is not, as hitherto supposed, by the poet Delisle [sic]<sup>1</sup> but by a real German, the Hofkapellmeister Holtzmann. It is the same Holtzmann in praise of whom Mozart writes in his letters to his father from Mannheim and a religious cantata by whom was produced during Mozart's stay in Paris.

Here I choke, as Faust says. No one who knows Mozart's biography and letters has ever found any mention of Holtzmann:

<sup>1</sup>Hamma perhaps confuses Rouget de Lisle with the poet Jacques Delille (1738-1813).



he does speak of the well-known Ignaz Holzbauer, who was born in Vienna, in 1711, and died in 1783, nine years before the composition of the *Marseillaise*. Hamma's assertions apply to him well enough: he is indeed "a true German," for Leopold Mozart writes to his distinguished son on November 10, 1777, "Herr Holzbauer was always a brave, true man." But although Wilhelm Heinse, the author of the noteworthy musical novel *Hildegart von Hohenthal*, rightly says of Holzbauer that he was the living chronicle of eighteenth-century music, still he did not—shall we say, unfortunately?—compose the *Marseillaise*. This I shall show positively. For Holzbauer's works, among them the well-known opera "*Günther von Schwarzburg*," admired by Mozart, have been edited by the most distinguished historians of music, men like Kretzschmar and Riemann; and up to to-day no one has discovered any trace of the *Marseillaise*. Still, perhaps Hamma was more lucky. Let us look further on, at what the man writes:

When this Kapellmeister composed the melody of the *Marseillaise*, it was not at all his intention to produce so world-shaking a tune, for—who would suspect it?—the melody around which cluster so many bloody memories was originally the music for the Credo of a mass which was composed certainly twenty years before the French Revolution.

The manuscript from which I made this discovery is marked 1778. During my residence in Meersburg, as organist and director of music in the city church of Constance, I examined with care the library of music in the bishop's residence which came under my management, and which is remarkably rich in manuscripts.

Especially interesting to me were manuscripts which had come from Kloster Salem to Prince Dalberg and from him to the city church: these were mostly masses, vespers, etc., by Italian and German masters. Among them I found six Masses with this title:

*VI Missae breves, stylo elegantiori ad modernum genium elaboratae, comp. de Holtzmann.*

These especially appealed to me for their beautiful airs, their flowing melodies, rich setting, and delicate instrumentation. I looked them through carefully, and naturally was not a little surprised to discover in the Credo of number IV (in G) the complete air of the *Marseillaise*. As one can see, this is not a question of a similarity, of a reminiscence which might happen accidentally, but it is a note for note identity in melody, in harmony, measure, and key, so that Delisle must have had Holtzmann's Mass before him, must have copied it off when he set the music to his poem.

Stop a minute. So it wasn't Holzbauer. If we provisionally accept the truth of Hamma's find, we are confronted with the facts that a certain Holtzmann (whom Hamma confuses with Holzbauer) wrote a mass in 1778, the Credo of which "as one can see" was note for note like the *Marseillaise*. Yes, but one "saw"

nothing. Hamma took good care not to publish his discovery, for then the swindle would have been discovered sooner. Whoever knows the true story of the *Marseillaise* knows how impossible it would have been for Rouget de Lisle in that famous turbulent night, even with the best will in the world, hurriedly to copy down the melody from a mass. Listen to Hamma's naïve explanation:

The thing is easily [?] explained. Delisle wrote the verses of his hymn and wanted to have it sung; but since no composer was at hand, he put down the music himself, being somewhat of a dilettante in music. Probably, [!] he had often played and sung in churches and convents, so that he knew Holtzmann's masses, which though still only in manuscript had become known on the Rhine, in Alsace, in Speier and in Strassburg. [One question: if they had become so widely known, how does it happen that no copy has been found except the one at Meersburg?] He found it then more convenient to supply his words with a tune already at hand than to hunt up a new one. We will not find fault with him for it; he made a good choice, and if this were the only robbing of German property which occurred in those times, then our forefathers were to be congratulated. Nevertheless, I believe it my duty to the truth to give the proof—which I do the more gladly that it concerns the veritable property of a German composer, whose work deserves to be snatched from oblivion...

I do not know any biography of Delisle, but it would be possible from knowing where he lived to discover the church where he found the jewel with which he adorned his spirited poem and through which it won its greatest significance. In the meantime I announce to those who are interested in the circumstances, that the masses of Holtzmann are kept as the property of the city church in Meersburg in the collection of church music there, and that the original of the *Marseillaise* Credo referred to will gladly be shown by the present director of music.

Two points in this statement are especially noteworthy:

1. The tone of absolute truth in the statements of Hamma.
2. The reference to the proof at Meersburg.

Let us see how these two points stand.

Naturally, Hamma's article attracted unusual attention in Germany, and not less in France. Though people in France were not inclined on patriotic grounds to believe Hamma, still they could bring no counter-proof, since Hamma was so prudent as not to publish his Credo. On the other hand, people on the German side energetically attacked him, though unfortunately not publicly.

It was not until 1887—that is, twenty-six years later—that the musical critic Ernst Pasqué published in Number 10 of the *Neue Musikzeitung* of Cologne a notice in which he brought forward the following facts. The son of Hofgerichtsdirektor Christ, of Baden (who had belonged to the famous Frankfort

Parliament in 1848, and who is clearly shown thereby to have been a prominent man)—this son told Pasqué that his father once, in 1861, journeyed to Neustadt to see Hamma, because the researches which Christ had personally pursued in Meersburg had been entirely without success. Hamma had—so Christ affirmed—answered evasively: "It must have got lost in Meersburg." Also a copy of the Credo which he said he possessed, he refused, on trifling grounds, to show.

With that the thing was clearly enough branded as a swindle. I must and will, however, give the further proof, since it has been believed for years and since to me in 1915 a "proof" of the existence of Holtzmann's masses was openly offered.

The first to reopen the question after Christ's energetic statement was Wilhelm Tappert. In his papers there is a copy of a letter signed by F. Hamma from Munich, August 19, 1882. This runs:

I discovered the Masses of Holtzmann at the time that I was choir-master and organist to the earlier bishop's church in Meersburg on the Bodensee (1845-49). I was then still very young and treated the discovery as a musical curiosity without realizing the political bearing of it. That did not become clear to me until later. The burgomaster, Henstetter, who played the contrabass in the church, was interested in the remarkable Credo and took the Holtzmann masses to his house, which could happen the more easily in that Herr Dekan Heim was very indignant after the first performance, and forbade me to repeat it.

Up to this point the story seems plausible. Now come some remarkable statements:

During my residence in Geneva I related the fact in a company and some Frenchmen got angry about it. I had despatched to me an attested copy. This copy I gave later to M. Fétis in Brussels, who entered into conflict with the descendants of Rouget de Lisle about the authorship. That led to a suit, which, as I read in the newspapers, he won.

The exact contrary is true: Fétis lost his suit with the nephews of Rouget and finally had to state in a letter to Kastner, dated October 27, 1864 (printed by Loquin), that he had no longer any doubts about Rouget's authorship of both the words and music. "Dès ce moment, toutes les doutes sont dissipées, et toute polémique doit cesser." ("From this moment, all doubts are dissipated and all discussion should cease.")

Moreover, in this whole discussion, Fétis made no reference to Hamma's discovery: he either never received Hamma's alleged offering or he had not taken it seriously. Fétis had

attributed the authorship to Navoigille, but he was convinced of the contrary by Kastner. Hamma goes on:

Burgomaster Henstetter with his wife and daughter died and it was not possible for me to get the original copy of the Mass in question: also the choir-regent in Meersburg could give me no information except that the masses of Holtzmann appeared on the inventory but were no longer to be found.

So, between 1845 and 1849 took place the first and the last appearance of the Credo in Meersburg, the original of which the Burgomaster took home. But in 1861 in the "Gartenlaube" Hamma referred everyone to the original in Meersburg, while in answer to the demands made by Christ, he tried to excuse himself by telling of the death of the burgomaster. However, finer things follow:

But I happened to find in the Cistercian convent at Ochsenhausen an old copy of the masses in question, which, tempted by an extraordinarily high price, I sold to an American. The copy of the melody, which I sent you, is from a copy of the original which I wrote hastily in my notebook at the time. Copies of the Holtzmann Masses might undoubtedly be found in the churches of Upper Swabia and Baden. Several years ago there was in the *Swabian Merkur* an advertisement of the auction of musical instruments and music from the church administration in Constance, where masses of Holtzmann were mentioned. Unfortunately I could not go to Constance as I intended.

Remarkable circumstance! Unfortunately, too, the lucky American who alone possessed "authentic" masses by Holtzmann, never turned up again. Tappert notes that he kept with the letter a copy of the passage from the sketch-book referred to in it:

Whoever has any experience with old things, must see at the first glance that the Credo is formed from the *Marseillaise*, not the other way around. It doesn't matter who did it. Perhaps such a composer as Holtzmann never existed.

So Tappert, who straightens out a few other inaccuracies in Hamma's long letter: Hamma brings up the opinion already noted on the authorship of Reichardt (he writes "Reichmann"! ) and falsely asserts that the text of the *Marseillaise* was only a translation of a war song by Eulogius Schneider. The truth is, what even Tappert did not know, that some six months after its composition, Schneider translated the poem into German. (See Tiersot, *La Marseillaise*, Paris, 1915, p. 73.) This version by Schneider seems to have been printed in the paper *Argos oder der Mann mit vier Augen* (editors Schneider and Buttenschön). Neither Hamma nor Tappert could have run across copies of it. Hamma declares that he got this information from Buttenschön

in Speyer and Schmolze in Pirmasens, two intimate friends of Schneider. At all events this "proof" that the authorship of the text may be attributed to Germany, is shattered. Tappert shows in conclusion:

The credibility of Herr Hamma's account is unfortunately weakened with those who know him and who know the circumstances. I must say that to me the contradictions between the first statement in the *Gartenlaube* and the letter of 1882 are extremely suspicious. Lack of fundamental knowledge and trustworthy memory are combined with unusual credulity. He is taken in by every old gossip.

Unfortunately I can not find among Tappert's papers the air sent to him by Hamma. It seems on the whole as if the letter of Hamma's given above had not been sent to Tappert himself, as would be thought at first, but to August Reiser (1840-1904), who was from 1880-86 Editor of the *Tongersche Neue Musikzeitung* in Cologne. In November, 1892—that is, not until 31 years after Hamma's discovery—there appeared in the periodical *Chorgesang* a contribution from Reiser dated May 1 and entitled *Neues von der Marseillaise*. In the introduction to this article it was stated that the trustworthiness of Hamma was to be doubted, as indeed were also the Masses and even the existence of Holtzmann. In this connection it was mentioned as "new and interesting" that the author had happened upon an apparently old copy of the Credo in question in a manner surprising but unimportant for the subject (!). Reiser wrote further:

That the composition which is reproduced in this number can make claim to authenticity is an open question; I do not venture an answer. Merely proof was to be furnished that the "legendary" Credo did actually exist. In the style of this composition one can not fail to see the fashion of the old local masses. But that does not prove much, for unfortunately similar methods were very much the fashion with us a few years ago. This unusual work will at least arouse interest as a curiosity!

I find a strange commentary on this article of Reiser's in Tappert's marginal note:

On August 10, 1881, Reiser sent to me from Cologne the fragmentary manuscript of the Credo of the supposed Holtzmann. Reiser acted as if he had discovered anew an old document. Not at all! According to my conviction it is only a fruit of the Hamma swindle. Wrote to Reiser Nov. 19, 1892. Reiser is publishing the copy which Hamma sent him; on this see passages in Hamma's letter to Reiser, Munich, Aug. 19, 1882.

Before I now republish Reiser's copy of the Holtzmann Credo, I shall sketch the further development of the affair. From

Reiser, the violinist Adolf Köckert (1828-1911) got a copy, about which he spoke in an article in the *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* (1898). Köckert (who incidentally took Grison for the author of the *Marseillaise*, a theory long ago disproved) added an interesting news-item to the controversy. He writes:

Authentic documentary proof does not appear, only the word of Fridolin Hamma, who as he lay ill and at the point of death in Cannstatt assured his brother Franz Hamma, now royal music director in Metz, (to whom I owe this information): "What I wrote is true: I had a copy of Holtzmann's Credo which I can't find. I will do nothing more in the matter." [Apparently Fridolin Hamma had sent this copy to his colleague Reiser, and then forgotten it.]

Now we must ask this question: Was Hamma a deceiver or was he a dupe or was he both? I think he was the last, and this impression is strengthened by a conjecture of Köckert's. He surmises that in order to make fun of the revolutionary ideas of Hamma, who had taken so serious a part in the revolution of 1848 that he had to fly to Switzerland, a joker had imposed on him with this mass the *Marseillaise* Credo. And after carrying out his joke, the joker had taken back the mass. And later Hamma, when he went on the search from Munich to Meersburg, failed to find it, as did many other people who "without the least result" took a great deal of trouble to get a trace of the treasure. The more remarkable is it that suddenly, when I had confuted Moszkowski's fantasies in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, I was opposed by a certain Rudolf Franz in a long article, *Das Urbild der Marseillaise*, in *Vorwärts* (the great Social Democrat paper) for August 9, 1915. He asserts that the earlier seekers in Meersburg must have gone about it "very indifferently," for he had himself seen in the choir of the church about three years before, at least one mass by the alleged Holtzmann. He declares that he was at Meersburg at the beginning of August, 1912, where the organist helped him search with his son. In a cabinet of music he found among eighteenth-century masses one by Hamma and one by Holtzmann. However, the one by Holtzmann, a missa *solemnis* (where Hamma spoke of a missa *brevis*), proved not to be the one sought for. All the other old music had been either burnt at some earlier time, or sold as waste paper. Franz, too, had to conclude that it would hardly be possible to find the Credo of the little mass by Holtzmann in the diocese of Constance. But he does not give up hope:

Perhaps it is still tucked away in some other corner of the southwest. Germany has supplied many spiritual weapons for the battle of



mankind's deliverance, and it would be a small comfort if also the revolutionary Song of Songs that is brought back to us to-day after a long while should be proved to be old German property.

I then answered Herr Franz that since the "Holtzmann" manuscript found by him lay in such suspicious proximity to one by Hamma, I could only believe that Hamma had "baptized" other old manuscripts besides the *Marseillaise* mass with the same name. But even if I granted the existence of Holtzmann, even if I granted the authenticity of the Credo, there still remains a great stumbling-block. *I can prove with mathematical accuracy, not only that the mass was not in existence before 1792, but even that it came into existence after 1825.* Compare the two following versions of the *Marseillaise*: the first is that of the first printed edition of 1792, the second is the one which Rouget de Lisle published in 1825 as the authoritative form. (It was further "officially revised" and somewhat spoiled under General Boulanger.) Whoever cannot see that the Holtzmann "Credo" which I reproduce is fashioned after the *second* version, is beyond help of mine; musically he cannot be saved:

#### THE MARSEILLAISE, 1792 AND 1825



I  
II  
I  
II

## HOLTZMANN'S CREDO

*Allegretto moderato*

III  
Cre-do in u-num De-um, Pa-trem om-ni-po-ten-tem, fac-  
to-rem coe-li et ter-rae, vi-si-bi-li-um om-ni-um, vi-si-  
bi-li-um om-ni-um. Et in u-num, Et in u-num Do-mi-num Je-sum  
Et in u-num

III  
Chris-tum, Fi-li-um De-i u-ni-ge-ni-tum; et ex Pa-tre na-tum ap-te  
om-ni-a sae-cu-la. De-um de De-o, lu-men de lu-mi-  
ne. Et vi-tam ven-tu-ri, ven-tu-ri sae-cu-li. A-men.

Here "Et incarnatus" and "Resurrexit" is in the same manner before the ending.

## POETRY AND THE COMPOSER

By E. H. C. OLIPHANT

THAT the composer of vocal music must, in order to achieve complete success, provide work of more than mere tonal beauty or musical distinction or harmonic originality is generally recognised. Those are the purely musical features that may be demanded of a wordless rhapsody. Of him who is giving a musical setting to a piece of verse it is demanded also that he shall clothe the poem in a fitting musical garb, adequately express the sense of the words, reproduce the atmosphere, and reveal the hidden meaning (if the poem have any), so as to enable the music-loving public to enter into its spirit. Too often nothing more is asked of a musical illustrator of words; but, in asking only this much, the critics demand practically only what is asked of the writer of any piece of programme music or any composer endeavoring to create a definite impression or to excite particular emotions. For those who take the large view of the setting of a poem and are content to provide an equivalent for it that does not profess to be an equivalent in detail, words are really of little consequence. Debussy's "*Chevaux de bois*," for example, would under the same title make scarcely a less appeal to us were it destitute of words; and in piano pieces examples may be found of the representation of an underlying idea not conveyed in the title—the analogy to the hidden meaning concealed beneath the poet's words.

But, in addition to the recognised requirements of the composer for the voice, that he shares with all musicians, and those that he shares with every species of musical illustrator, there is a third class for which there is no analogy in any other branch of music. More or less unrecognised, the demands of this class are concerned not merely with the idea, but with the poem itself; and it is of them I particularly wish to speak. Before doing so, however, I shall say a few words regarding the four recognised requirements already referred to—that the composer shall find the true musical equivalent for the plain sense of the poem in its totality; that the variety of his setting shall be no less than the variety of the poem and shall adequately portray its various phases; that he shall have regard not merely to the words

themselves, but also to their dramatic value; and that he shall appreciate the poem's underlying significance, realise its spirit, and convey to his hearers all it hints as well as all it says.

The first two are not to be confused. In a sense they represent two clashing schools of song-composition—one holding to the theory that the music should convey only the general impression and not descend to detail, the other maintaining that every phase of meaning should be followed. There are, in fact, poems that seem to call for the one method of treatment, and poems that call for the other. It may be urged, then, that we have here not two requirements, but one only; but, in reality, the complete exclusion of either of these two conditions is a mistake. No poem can stand as a whole if its parts be not right, and no musical illustration of it can be satisfactory that does not recognise the call of the parts as well as the call of the whole. There must be a shading and a refining, so that the general impression may not be destroyed; but that is by no means the same thing as the ignoring of the individual words and phrases. The composer, then, besides satisfying the requirements of the poem as a whole, must pay due attention to the sentences that make it what it is.

It is a rare thing in these days to find any vocal composer of class unheedful of the meaning of his words. Even the purveyor of music for the dramatic trash whose claim to be called "musical comedy" can be justified only on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle is careful to fit his melody to the sense of the verse, and it is hardly to be doubted that the days when heroines died to waltz-tunes have gone never to return. Where one sees a composer of any eminence apparently ignoring the meaning of the words it is generally clear that he is doing so deliberately, in order to get away from a recourse to the obvious. To do that is merely to step out of the frying-pan into the fire.

The realism that results from the perfect musical rendering of the words of a poem is well illustrated in a few examples that occur to me—among modern songs, Ravel's setting of Renard's "Le paon," Debussy's rendering of the "Chevaux de bois" of Verlaine, and Mallinson's "We sway along," set to words by Henley; and, among earlier ones, Parry's version of Shakespeare's lyric "When icicles hang by the wall." The strut and the hoarse cry of the peacock, the infernal racket of the steam merry-go-round, the swaying of the train and the screech of the railway engine, the heavy tread of the bearer of solid logs into the squire's hall are all perfectly rendered in these admirable *Lieder*; but, if we take into consideration another song where the realistic quality is of

the very highest, Debussy's setting of Pierre Louÿs' "*La flûte de Pan*," we shall see of how much less importance is this realistic quality than is the imaginative; for it will hardly be urged that the wonderful rendering of the croaking of the frogs is the supreme merit of that loveliest of songs. Rather is its chief charm to be found in the marvellous realisation of the spirit of the poet, in the extraordinary ability shown in the creation of atmosphere, and in the perfect beauty in which the whole is bathed. In that greater quality which grasps the spirit behind the word, lays bare the whole of the lyric's meaning, and clothes his work with a new beauty, other songs that may be mentioned are Schubert's "*Doppelgänger*," Borodin's "*Belle au bois dormant*," Mussorgsky's "*Trepak*," Strauss's "*Im Spätboot*," and more than one of the songs of Wolf, Fauré, Ravel, and Kœchlin. Wolf's setting of Eichen-dorff's "*Das Ständchen*" is worthy of particular remark. The verse constitutes an address by the poet to a gallant whom he hears serenading his lady-love. The poet is reminded of his own serenading days and of the death of his sweetheart, and his sadness permeates the whole poem. Wolf, giving to the voice the words of the poet, gives to the piano the lute accompaniment of the distant serenader, and so, without any disturbance of the words or of the sense of them, creates just the right atmosphere.

The relation that the atmosphere of a poem has to the words as a whole has a parallel in the relation that the dramatic value of individual passages has to the words constituting those passages. When I speak of "dramatic value," I mean that behind what is said we have to consider by whom it is said and the circumstances attending its utterance. Thus in Housman's "*Is my team ploughing?*" we have to bear in mind that half the poem is spoken by a dead man. In Vaughan Williams' setting the general idea is excellently conveyed; but he fails to preserve the capital conception with which he has started. Apparently forgetting that the spokesman is but a spirit, he makes him shout out his last query to his supplanter, and the living man shouts back still more loudly. Fine as the song is, dramatically it goes to pieces. His setting of the last stanza might or might not be regarded as appropriate could we forget between whom the dialogue was being maintained; but that we cannot forget without disregarding the whole purpose of the poem.

For every one who knows Williams' setting of Housman's verse there are dozens who are acquainted with Schubert's setting of Goethe's "*Erlkönig*." To question the perfectly dramatic characterisation of that song may be deemed blasphemous; but,

as a matter of fact, ought not the Erlking's words to be colored by our (and the child's) knowledge of his malevolence? Ought not his tempting to show, beneath the sweetness of his words, beneath the beauty of the musical phrases he employs, something of the evil that inspires them? Neither Loewe nor Schubert makes any attempt to do more than illustrate the actual words. Though it is obviously the boy's realisation of the wickedness behind the temptation that makes him so agitatedly fearful, the music shows us nothing to account for the terror he displays in the earlier verses.

If I am to name a song that, though undeniably beautiful, fails to reproduce the spirit of the poem it attempts to illustrate musically, it shall be John Ireland's setting of Masfield's "Sea fever." The tone of Masfield's verse finds no analogy in the robe of plaintive melancholy in which the composer has enveloped it. Vaughan Williams' setting of Stevenson's "Vagabond," on the contrary, is in just the right vein, for this composer, without being great in detail, has a marvellous faculty for finding the fitting figure for illustration of the general movement of a poem, though of the soul that lies beneath the movement he sees little. Where the meaning of a poem does not lie upon the surface, French composers realise the inward significance much better than do their English rivals, and much better than do the modern Germans, with the exception of Hugo Wolf; and it is not therefore surprising to note to how much greater an extent French composers choose for musical setting lyrics which leave much to the imagination. A Verlaine poem is an impression, calling sometimes on sister arts for interpretation; and French composers respond to the call gladly, as they would not do to the call of verse of much clearer significance.

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To render musically the atmosphere of a poem, to reproduce its spirit melodically and harmonically, to give adequate representation to the words, and to see beneath the words into the very soul of the poet: these things imply the possession of a strong imaginative faculty, but they do not necessarily imply that the composer is gifted with any literary sense. Too often indeed the composers of the English-speaking peoples have none, and make woeful display of their failing in almost every vocal work they put forth; and it may be taken for granted that they will continue to do so till a school of musical critics shall arise that will insist



that due attention be paid to the structure and form of the verse set. For that to happen, however, it will be necessary for the musical critics themselves to have a thorough mastery of verse-principles—to be, in fact, not merely musical critics, but, potentially at least, literary critics also.

The demands made on the composer with regard to the words as literature may be divided into three classes. The first calls for no acquaintance with the mechanism of verse; the second, merely for a slight literary instinct; and the third, by far the most important, a thorough understanding of the rhythmic principles on which verse is constructed. The requirements of the first group are three in number, all of a very elementary character.

First of all, the composer must respect the words of the poet: he must not alter or omit or add or repeat words to suit the exigencies of his melodic line, or for any other purpose whatever—not even to stress a vital phrase. Secondly, the pauses must be accurately fitted to the sense. Thirdly, there must be proper relation between notes and syllables.

To begin with the first of these three rules, it will readily be granted that to alter the words of a poem is unpardonable, and that to insert or omit words, to the ruin of the metre, is the act of an ignoramus; but it is no crime for a composer to omit an entire stanza, so long as the sense is not interfered with. The commonest form of neglect of this rule is not, however, in the direction of the omission of words essential to either the metre or the sense, the substitution of alien words and ideas for those of the poem, or the introduction of additional words, to the alteration of the verse or the meaning or both. It is to be found rather in the duplication of existing words and phrases, lines and stanzas. The repetition of an entire stanza is a very venial fault, especially where the composer can make a good effect by repeating at the end of a song the stanza with which it began. Even part of a stanza may thus be repeated without the composer's being guilty of a fault worth speaking of. No one, for example, is likely to blame Schubert for closing his "*Gretchen am Spinnrade*" with a repeat of the first two lines of the poem, since it is in entire harmony with the spirit of the verse and is dramatically effective. But the evil of a repetition is in inverse ratio to its extent. To repeat a stanza does not affect the poem, if the choice be made with discrimination (though of course many poems will admit of no such duplication), whereas the repetition of a single line alters the stanza-form (without, however, affecting the metre), while the repetition of only a portion of a line may seriously affect the metre. If it be a complete foot

that is duplicated, it is only in the length of the line that the metre is changed; but, if it be a single word that is doubled, or a whole foot and a portion of another, the rhythm is ruined. Thus if in the line

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold

the last six words be repeated, it means practically the insertion of an additional two-foot anapaestic line. If the repeat consist of "like a wolf" only, the line becomes a five-foot instead of a four-foot one; but, if the composer repeat the word "down" alone or "down like a wolf," he entirely alters the metrical construction of the verse.

Duplication of the words of a poem may have three different effects. It may do no more than alter the stanza-form; it may ruin the metre; and it may (in addition to either or both of these evils) rob the verse of its beauty, its simplicity, its force, or its sense. The standard examples of sins of this character are afforded by Beethoven's "Adelaide" and Liszt's "Lorelei"; in the later and greater of these two famous songs, Heine's simple lines containing the direct statement

Und das hat mit ihrem Singen  
Die Lorelei gethan,

become such an insane medley of words as

Und das hat mit ihrem Singen  
Die Lorelei, die Lorelei gethan.  
Und das hat mit ihrem Singen  
Die Lorelei, die Lorelei gethan,  
Die Lorelei gethan.  
Und das hat mit ihrem Singen  
Die Lorelei, die Lorelei gethan,  
Die Lorelei gethan.

In Beethoven's song the senseless repetitions are perhaps even more irritating; but I might give dozens of instances of this class of fault from works of some of the greatest composers. Among present-day men, Bantock is an especial sinner.

Cases where, without impairment of the sense, the stanza-form is ruined by repetitions are also common. Brahms, one of the greatest of song-composers, does not hesitate to repeat lines, to the destruction of the mould of the poem he is setting, and one can scarcely find a leading composer who has not done so when it has suited his purpose. When the repeat is at the end of the stanza no great harm is done; to see the fault at its worst, one has to look for it in settings of some of the fixed forms of verse, such

as the sonnet, the rondel, or the triolet, especially those (like the two last named) based on a system of repeats in definite places. To repeat these lines elsewhere or to duplicate other lines anywhere is destructive of the form. It is therefore amazing to find Charles Kœchlin, than whom scarcely any composer living shows more respect for the verse he is setting, spoiling one or two of Théodore de Banville's rondels in this way.

Even more objectionable are duplications that are destructive of the rhythm. And here again I will illustrate from the work of Kœchlin, for the reason that such faults are exceedingly rare with him. In "*Le colibri*" he flaws what would otherwise be an almost perfect song by his repetition of "*tant d'amour*" in the line

*Et boit tant d'amour dans la coupe rose.*

It would be possible to cite many worse cases; but this one is interesting because rhetorically it is justified. An orator often makes his impression by repeating the phrase he wishes to imprint upon the minds of his auditors, and the musician may obtain an effect similarly. If it were possible to justify such a liberty, it would be justifiable in this case, for the composer has steeped the duplication of the words in the very languor of love. If there is no variation in the words, there is assuredly a variation in the music. There is no sterile repetition, but a revealing one, full of beauty, perfectly expressing the idea. From every point of view but the one, it is pardonable, and indeed admirable; but it has the fault of breaking the rhythm of the verse.

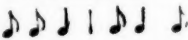
The question of pauses is also deserving of consideration. The musical phrasing must fit the idea like a glove. It will not do to have the voice flow on after "*I am the captain of my fate*" in Henley's famous poem, to rest after "*I am*" in the next line—"*I am the master of my soul.*" The composer who would do that would be on about the mental level of the Prologue of the "*base mechanicals*" of Shakespeare's fancy—"If we offend, it is with our good will." It might not be impossible for him to set

There is a providence that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them as we may,

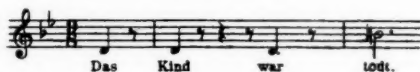
with no rest at "*ends,*" but with a break after "*rough.*" To thus transfer the rest from where it should be to where it should not be is folly one can scarcely expect to find; but it is found nevertheless in composers of high reputation. In Cyril Scott's delightful "*White Knight,*" for example, the words "*In a meadow fair*" are attached to the preceding "*Weep no more*" and separated by a

whole bar from the succeeding "By his grave friars four speed his soul with prayer," to which they properly belong; so that the lady who is addressed is bidden not to weep in a meadow fair, as if there would be some particularly heinous sin in watering a meadow with tears which should be reserved for her boudoir. Faults of this double character, where the pause is not where it should be and is where it should not be, are not remarkably common; but we do often enough find errors either of commission or of omission. Sometimes the fault is partly the poet's. In Wilde's "Requiescat," for instance, he has

Lily-like, white as snow,  
She hardly knew  
She was a woman, so  
Sweetly she grew.

George Butterworth, in setting the words "woman, so sweetly she," presented them as : trying, not very successfully, to preserve the lilt of the verse, he ignored the necessity for a separation of the words "woman" and "so." The composer cannot afford so to overlook the sense. By running straight on from the one word to the next, Butterworth practically ignored the comma, and, so doing, clouded the meaning; and the use of a crotchet accentuates the difficulty thus created.

Sometimes a rest is found between the syllables of a word. That is hopelessly wrong, unless the idea is to convey a sense of sobbing or violent agitation. The reason for it in such a song as Wagner's "Im Treibhaus" is difficult to discover; nor can any reasonable excuse be made for the rests between the final words of Goethe's "Erkönig" in Loewe's setting—



As a cry wrung from the heart of a father, this might have been fitting enough: in mere narrative it is quite out of place: there is no call for utterance so spasmodic.

Of these three demands that, though concerned with the mechanism of the verse, call for no prosodic knowledge on the part of the composer (for even in the matter of the rhythm all he has to do is to avoid interference with the sequence of the words), at once the most serious and the least recognised is the need for so welding the music and the words that every syllable shall be represented by a single note. To allow the voice to wander over

a succession of notes for the expression of a single syllable, as in Purcell's "I attempt from love's sickness to fly" or Godard's well-known and attractive "*Chanson arabe*," is wholly to ignore poetic form. If, instead of singing, we read Charpentier's rendering of a line in Verlaine's "*Chevaux de bois*,"

Tournez-ez, au-au son joyeux des-es-es-es tambou-ours

we perceive how painfully absurd it is. The matter may be put in another way by contrasting the words to which the music has been wedded with words that it would have fitted. Thus, a line of the poem in Sir Gilbert Parker's "*Pierre and his people*" which Arthur Foote has made famous as "*An Irish Folk-song*" runs, "You'll be comin' back, my darlin'." The composer has fitted to it a musical phrase that would be better suited to a line consisting of the words "You'll be comin' back again, O my dearest one."

In singling out songs by Charpentier and Foote for examples of this fault I am not desiring to attach to those composers any evil preëminence. The difficulty is to find a composer who does not, when it suits his purpose, ignore the very obvious claim of the verse to dictate the contour of the music that is supposed to represent it. There are not many who follow the admirable example set by Jaques-Dalcroze in his beautiful and dramatic "*Chansons rustiques*," the greater number of the songs in that set observing the rule (whether it has ever been formulated or not) that in the voice-part every syllable shall have a note, and every note a syllable. Examples may of course be gathered from the songs of Schubert and Schumann and Franz; but the rule has been, on the whole, even among the very greatest writers for the voice, "more honored in the breach than the observance." By far the greatest offenders to-day are the composers of the English-speaking nations. The fault is perhaps to be seen at its worst in Noel Johnson's fine song "*If thou wert blind*"—

If thou wert bli-ind, I would gi-ive my si-ight,  
Lest my darkness should set me far from thee-ee.

That is horrible.

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Between this group and the more important one yet to be dealt with mention must be made of a rule which should be scrupulously observed, but is occasionally disregarded, often apparently as a result of ignorance of the simplest rudiments of English verse.

One showing himself capable of counting the number of syllables in a line of verse would not necessarily be considered a master of prosody; on the contrary, incapacity in such a matter on the part of a presumably educated man would be deemed astounding; yet some of our best song-composers show themselves incompetent to perform this elementary task correctly, or, if they are competent, most callously ignore the poet's intention, either suppressing syllables used by him or using ones he has suppressed. Examples are most easily found in the case of words where poetic license permits the addition of a syllable not employed in prose (as in the use of "bereaved" for "bereaved"). For the composer to alter the poet's determination in such a matter is unpardonable. There are, moreover, many words in English in which the number of syllables is not rigidly fixed. Such words as "flower" and "heaven," for instance, may be treated either as monosyllables or as dissyllables. The choice is a privilege possessed by the poet; but that privilege does not pass to the composer, for he cannot depart from the lead of the poet without detriment to the verse as verse.

I have said that often his disregard of the poet's intention is due apparently to misunderstanding of the metre. It seems to be so in Cyril Scott's "Evening," where, in the second stanza, the name-word of the song, used by Dowson as a trisyllable, is taken dissyllabically, the deliberateness of it being shown by the binding of two quavers that might well have formed the first two of three syllables; but it may be that Scott, disliking this absurd outstretching of the word, preferred to sacrifice the metre rather than repeat the blemish. Further on in the same song, however, the poet is followed in making "oblivion" a word of four syllables, in order to enable it to rhyme with "sun." Here probably the composer felt that he could not depart from the author's rendering. He was "between the devil and the deep sea," with a choice between unfaithfulness to the poet and the spoiling of his own work. He might have realised that, in the circumstances, it was best to consider the poem not one for setting.



The two remaining requirements, forming the final group, are more exacting than those already dealt with, since they call for the appreciation of prosodic principles: the one demands correct accentuation; the other, the proper distribution of notes on a duration-basis consistent with the length of the syllables



that make up the verse. It may be convenient to take the two in some measure together.

English poetry is a matter principally of the distribution of stresses. It may be said broadly that the stressed syllable is one in two or one in three, or it may be irregular in its incidence, consisting sometimes of every second and sometimes of every third syllable. The poetic stress is generally, but not invariably, identical with the stress natural in such a collocation of words. But English verse does not consist merely of an arrangement of accented and non-accented syllables; quantity also enters into it. A wonderful and not easily definable system of equivalences constitutes almost a root-principle of our prosody, three or four or five unaccented syllables often taking the place of an entire foot. Such a line as

For the poor benefit of a bewildering minute.

from that fascinating horror "The Revenger's Tragedy," is certainly not to be taken as a regular 6-foot line with a feminine ending, or even as a pentameter with a sprinkling of anapæstic feet (— — — — —), but as a line of four stresses distributed thus—

For the póor bénomit of a bewíldering mínute.

the long succession of unaccented syllables in the middle of the line being taken as the equivalent of a regular foot.

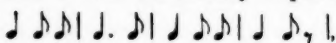
Everyone realises more or less that the bar determines the relation of the musical accentuation to the poetic stress; but very few appear to appreciate the fact that the "quantity" in the verse has its equivalent in the duration of the notes musically representing the syllables. The feet in any English verse are approximately of the one length; and, if an extra unaccented syllable be intruded, it and its fellow must each be passed over more lightly than a single unstressed syllable would be. Similarly, in a musical setting, the place of, say, a quaver for a single unaccented syllable must be taken by a couple of semiquavers for two such syllables—or at least the two together must have no greater value than a quaver.

In case anyone is in doubt as to the difference between accent and quantity in music, I shall give a very simple illustration.

Little Jack Horner  
Sat in a corner

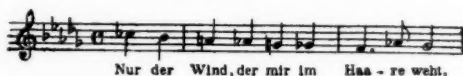
is, so far as accentuation goes, perfectly represented by



but to be accurately represented as to quantity it should be , because the second syllable of "Horner" and of "corner" is in the reading of the verse more or less lapped under the preceding syllable, and because the other unaccented syllables are not given the same distinctness and importance as the accented ones. Who would, as the first of the above two musical settings would suggest, read the verse

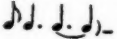
"Lit-tle Jack Hor-ner  
Sat in a cor-ner,

giving equal length to every syllable in each foot? That is the mistake Strauss makes in the loveliest of all his songs, "Im Spätboot," where he represents the line "Nur der Wind, der mir im Haare weht" so evenly and regularly as this



missing the lilt altogether.

On this matter of "quantity" in music no questions are asked, though the asking of such questions is highly desirable. The only demand made upon the composer in regard to the verse as verse is that he shall not be guilty of incorrect accentuation (he must not, for example, give us either "the lass *with* the delicate air" or "the lass *with the* delicate air"); but even on this score it is only when the mistakes are flagrant and glaring that any exception is taken to them. Yet there is little chance that the stress in the music will follow the stress in the poetry unless the composer has mastered the principles of verse-construction. Probably no composer is so totally lacking in the poetic sense as to think of setting iambic verse anapaestically, for to avoid doing so he needs only the most rudimentary knowledge of prosodic law—nothing more indeed than an elementary instinct for rhythm. But it is quite possible for one who recognises the general principles dominating any piece of verse to make a terrible hash of it in detail. So far as English poetry is concerned, consideration of the way in which blank verse is rendered on the stage or lyrics recited on the platform, leads to the belief that the proportion of people capable of approaching the rhythmic beauties of such

verse is exceedingly small, and a study of many settings of English lyrics does not induce one to regard our composers as belonging to the minority. To turn to the work of French composers is to find quite another state of affairs. Unless we are to regard them as merely more careful or more conscientious, we have to admit that they are much better acquainted with the laws of verse. Either they have a better instinct for metre or they have taken trouble to master the principles governing it. It is in their favor that French verse consists of a succession of practically unstressed syllables; but it is not to be supposed that therefore it is impossible for them to err. To dwell on a syllable that, though sounded in verse, is not sounded in ordinary speech—as, for instance, the “ge” of “mensonge,” which, in Fauré’s magnificent “Arpège,” is amazingly rendere  is as bad a mistake as can be

made by anyone setting English verse—much worse indeed than the lengthening of the second syllable in “lovely” or “maiden.” In French, however, such sins are pleasantly uncommon; in English they are lamentably common. Too often, with us, a “feminine ending” is given by the composer a ridiculous degree of importance, so that the singer finds himself expected to sing about “beauTY” or “evER” or “ranDOM”; though it must be confessed that, as a rule, he does not in the least mind doing so, and is indeed altogether unaware that he is doing anything absurd. So, too, we find—less frequently, but still far too frequently—important words slurred over, three or four syllables, including one calling aloud for accentuation, being squeezed into semi-quavers in the midst of a group of crotchets.

If, as I have said, false accentuation is much rarer in French music than in English, I may yet mention a very marked case in a really beautiful song, Fauré’s “Accompagnement.” He has set one line thus:—



Here note the accent on the second “âme,” whereas the verse requires the accentuation of “leur” and “mon,” which are treated antithetically. Fauré, failing to realise the point, has mangled the verse.

For an example of both wrongful accent and false quantity in French composition, let me quote the following from Chausson’s “Cantique à l’épouse”:



That a stressed minim should do duty for the concluding light syllable of the verse is deplorable.

It is not necessary to give examples of obvious false quantities or errors of accentuation in English songs: the reader has only to take up half-a-dozen by some of our best composers, and he will be lucky if he finds three out of the six free from such faults. But, apart from flaws that cannot fail to strike anyone with the most elementary knowledge of the principles of English prosody, there are many that will strike the reader possessed of a real sense of verse-values. He who is deaf to the lilt resulting from the complex system of equivalences to which I have already referred is deaf to all that is most beautiful in the verse of Shakespeare and the other masters of our tongue. He, for instance, who reads the first line of Hamlet's famous soliloquy as if it were pure iambic verse ("To bé or nó't to bé: that is the qué'stion") or so treats the King's line, "A very ribband in the cap of youth," turns the true poetry of swaying movement into the most ludicrous jog-trot. But, if English verse is the most difficult of all verse to master, the more call is there for our composers to give it loving study before they set to work to interpret it.

One difficulty in the setting of English poetry lies in the illustration of such a piece of verse as that of Wilde's already quoted, where the sense calls for the merging of one line into the next. The composer may be tempted to do as many reciters do in such cases—ignore the line-division. To do that, however, is to conceal the rhyme and practically to turn the verse into prose. That is the mistake so often made by elocutionists and by actors in Shakespearean drama. Such fault is the very reverse of the fault of Butterworth, who, in the passage quoted, gives us the rhyme to the obscuring of the sense, whereas Wolf, in his setting of Eichendorff's "Das Ständchen," obliterates the opening rhyme because the stress it calls for is unnatural. What is needed, both for declaiming and for singing, is that the sense shall be preserved (preferably by a proper provision of pauses), but that the line-ending shall receive a certain degree of stress, however unimportant may be the word filling the position. Where, the natural and the poetic stress being at variance, the composer cannot agree with both, he may be allowed to choose between them.

\*   \*  
\*

To how very slight an extent the rules here laid down are observed, or even recognised, may be realised by a consideration of any number of the world's greatest songs. I have examined 70 of my prime favorites, to find that 23 (about 33 per cent.) fail to show the required respect for the words of the author, three are at fault in pauses, 38 (approximately 54 per cent.) err in the matter of accentuation, and 43 (over 61 per cent.) fail to fit the length of their notes to the importance of the syllables they represent. (In all but the first of these four, the percentage of faulty songs is probably greater than I have stated, because I have not examined with such meticulous care as to be certain of having overlooked no flaw.) With regard to making the number of voice-notes coincide with the number of syllables, I tested 73 songs, adding to the previous 70 three Russian songs that I was, owing to my ignorance of the Russian language, unable to test in other respects; and of these 73 no less than 57 (or about 78 per cent.) were at fault. I made no investigation for deviations from the text's syllabification, because obviously there would be no opportunity for such errors in any but a small proportion of the songs. The songs examined were examples of Schubert, Loewe, Schumann, Wagner, Cornelius, Brahms, Wolf, Strauss, Mahler, Schillings, Fauré, Duparc, Chausson, Debussy, Kœchlin, Ravel, Roussel, Parry, Bantock, Williams, Butterworth, Carpenter and Mussorgsky; and, of the whole 73, only two fulfilled all the conditions, these being both French—one by Kœchlin, and one by Ravel. That is not surprising in view of what I have already pointed out—that French composers have much more respect for the poems they set and much more knowledge of prosodic law than have the composers of either the English or the German race.

## BIRD-MUSIC

By W. B. OLDS

FOR several years I have been a student of bird-music, and the more I study the subject, the more fascinating it becomes. While every excursion into birdland may bring its new records of melody, there is always the ever new delight of listening to the rapturous outpouring of exuberant spirits in songs as varied in style and quality of tone as do the singers themselves differ in color. Where else in nature can we find music so similar to our own, both in its style of delivery and in its melodic form? Indeed, I feel strongly that greater consideration should be given to the part which bird-music must have played in the origin and development of the music of mankind. It is quite conceivable that many folk-songs might have had their inspiration in the melodies which were heard repeated every day in the trees just outside the caves of our remote ancestors. A short melody often heard is easily remembered and imitated and will sometimes suggest words or syllables. Perhaps the melody will be repeated with other words having a somewhat similar sound. Then possibly a second theme differing more or less from the first will be conceived, followed by a return to the original melody, and we have a full grown folk-song.

But how little is bird-music appreciated, and what little use is made of the wonderfully beautiful melodies which every spring flood our meadows and woodlands. As a rule, composers have been content to write songs for children *about* the birds with no suggestion of the song of the bird under consideration, which might have been made an integral part of the song. So, too, for the most part, compilers of bird-guides and hand-books for bird study have been content to suggest merely the syllables which seem best to imitate the quality of the bird's voice, without giving any suggestion of the actual pitches or intervals sung. I recognize the fact that most of the ornithologists and writers on bird-life were not musicians, and presume that they took it for granted that music notes would mean nothing to the majority of their readers. But times are changing, and, thanks to the increasing attention given to music in the public schools, the page of printed music is no longer unintelligible to all save the initiated few. After all, there is not much information in the statement that a bird says, "zwee, zwee, zwee," or "wesee, wesee, wesee." One



writer says that the Chewink sings "Chuck-burr! pilla-willa-willa!" But I have a friend who says that when her husband goes out of the door of their summer cottage in the woods of Michigan, a Chewink calls out: "Preacher! tee! hee! hee! hee!" Now, if the actual intervals which these birds sang were supplied, together with the imitative syllables, we should have a much clearer idea of how they sang than can be gained from the syllables alone, and a song using the notes together with imitative words as a starting-point would be of still greater value in teaching bird-lore.

A great wave of interest in bird-life has swept the country during the past few years. Is it not an opportune time to direct greater attention to the beauties of bird-music, and to suggest that we make more systematic use of it as a means of identifying birds?

When I was a boy I could usually tell a Sparrow when I saw one, but to distinguish the different kinds of Sparrows either by their appearance or by their songs was beyond me; indeed, I was scarcely aware of the fact that each species has its own distinctive habits, its distinguishing markings and individual style of singing. As an illustration of the variety of style to be found in the songs of one family of birds, let me suggest here a few points of interest in the songs of some of the common sparrows.

Where can we find a more perfect accelerando than in the performance of the Field Sparrow, which may be heard any day in spring or early summer floating across the meadows and pastures?



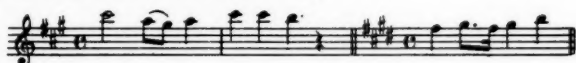
Or where is there to be heard a finer legato or more definite rhythm than that of the White-throated Sparrow?



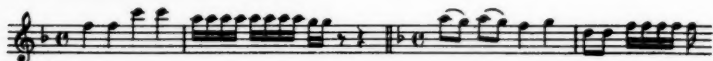
To be sure, most of us hear him only during his migratory visits, but in the springtime, the high, clear, fife-like tones seem to breathe the very spirit of freshness and revivification, while there creeps into his October song a certain plaintiveness quite in keeping with the season of slackened energy.

Acompanying the White-throat in his travels may often be heard the White-crowned Sparrow, whose song has also a very

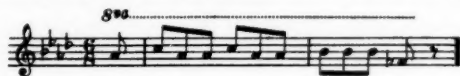
definite character, varying in intervals, but of a form quite unmistakable. Instead of the clarity of the White-throat's voice, however, we find a thin, reedy quality. Two interesting songs which I have noted are the following.



Of course, we soon tire of the Chipping Sparrow's monotone as he rapidly repeats his name "chippy-chippy-chippy," over and over, sounding, as some one remarked, like a Singer Sewing Machine. Nor can we see much beauty in the song of the Grasshopper Sparrow, which sounds more like an insect than a bird; but the Vesper Sparrow, easily distinguished in flight by his white outer tail feathers, has a really fine, clear voice and interesting songs, as the following will testify.



The finest singer among our resident sparrows is without doubt, however, the Song Sparrow; in fact, I am inclined to rank him as the finest melodist in all birddom. In tone quality he cannot compare with the Thrushes, but for variety and beauty of melodic themes, he is without a rival. And it is an easy matter to note most of his melodies, for his custom is to repeat one song at intervals, several times, until, seeming to tire of it, he switches to another, perhaps in a different key. His tonality is usually quite definite, and a given song is repeated time after time and day after day with practically no variation, and, most astounding of all, in the same key! There is little question that this bird, in common with several others, possesses the gift of absolute or positive pitch. A certain song means to him not merely a definite succession of intervals in a fixed rhythm, but absolute, fixed tones, from the sounding of which he does not vary. I have tested this many times and found it to hold true. Four years ago, I heard a New York Song Sparrow in the vicinity of Schroon Lake, singing this song day after day, and always in the key of A flat.



Three years later I revisited the spot and heard precisely the same song with no variation except that it had been pushed up very nearly a semitone. Undoubtedly the performance of the

same bird, the variation in pitch due perhaps to his advancing years! This song he alternated with the following.

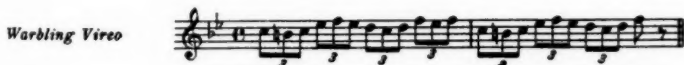


Here are three songs from the repertoire of a Song Sparrow living near Crystal Lake, Michigan.



In considering this whole subject of bird-music with a view to presenting something which might be of interest, it has seemed best to disregard family lines, and to suggest certain arbitrary groupings, with reference to the general character of their songs and style of delivery, as one might hear them during a stroll through wood and meadow. Possibly this grouping may be of value in assisting some to discriminate between those birds whose songs sound somewhat alike. I wish especially to emphasize this point, however, that one need not expect to hear any of these longer songs exactly as they appear here, as no two individual birds of the same species are likely to sing exactly the same songs. These are merely typical examples which I have happened to hear, though in each species the general form of song and style of delivery is fairly uniform.

### I. SINGLE SONG OF CONSIDERABLE LENGTH



Of these five birds, the songs of the Grosbeak and Tanager are the most commonly confused, though it may be observed that the Grosbeak's is delivered in a very flowing style, while the Tanager accentuates his song in a vigorous, emphatic manner. Here, too, is an interesting example of differing tone quality, as the Grosbeak's singing voice is a clear whistle, though heavy and rich, while the Tanager's has a beady quality. In the call-notes of these two birds we discover opposite characteristics, that of the Grosbeak being decidedly metallic and the Tanager's "Chip-chur" quite clear.

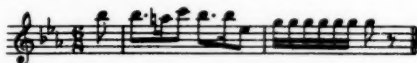
It will be noticed that the song which I have ascribed to the Warbling Vireo has somewhat the form of the Grosbeak's. They are not often confused, however, as the Vireo's song is given at a much more rapid tempo and with a lighter tone quality. The song is the very essence of lighthearted carelessness.

The Indigo Bunting is probably the most commonly heard of this quintet as he sings throughout the spring and early summer. Devotees of golf should be particularly well acquainted with him, for, without deviating from their course down the fairway, they may hear his entrancing melody issuing from an adjoining thicket. Different songs of the Bunting may differ greatly in form, but when once heard, his individual style will always serve to identify the singer.

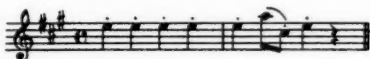
For the most of us, acquaintance with the song of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet is limited to his visits during his migratory journey of the early spring. To me, personally, there are few bird-songs of such ethereal beauty as the fairy-like, silver toned, ecstatic song of this tiny bird. It seems scarcely believable that such a cascade of sparkling tones, extremely high in pitch but wonderfully clear, could proceed from so small a throat. The musician who has not heard it has something to live for.

## II. SINGLE SONG OF MEDIUM LENGTH

*Bewick's Wren*



*Baltimore Oriole*



*Dickcissel*



*Bobolink**Chewink**Bluebird**Mourning Dove*

*Vesper Sparrow.* (For melodies see page 244.)

*White-throated Sparrow.* (For melodies see page 243.)

*White-crowned Sparrow.* (For melodies see page 244.)

Bewick's Wren is not as well known as the House Wren, but there is no mistaking his clear, ringing song, usually delivered from the top of a tall tree in the early spring.

The Baltimore Oriole has a style all his own, characterized by a succession of sharp, staccato tones and portamentos, with rhythms sometimes so markedly syncopated as to come close to the border of rag-time. His performances are, indeed, very interesting on many counts. Not the least is his action during singing, for instead of perching upon a twig and giving his undivided attention to the business of pouring forth his soul in song as do many others, he continues industriously at his task of hunting for worms, caterpillars, etc., interjecting his remarks between the disposal of the various titbits which he discovers. It may be observed that his use of the portamento produces an entirely different effect from that of the Wood Pewee or Mourning Dove, whose songs are decidedly plaintive. There is nothing mournful about the Oriole's song!

Dickcissel is known to but comparatively few people, but is one of our commonest birds. Any fine summer day a motorist may see him perched upon a telephone wire by the road-side, trying his best to pronounce his name—"Dick-dick-dick-cissel-cissel." It is not a beautiful voice, and his song soon becomes monotonous, but Dickcissel is a bird whom we would not willingly lose from among our summer songsters.

While the Bobolink may often be heard in a modest song like the one here quoted, he frequently follows it with a cadenza so brilliant and so dazzling as to defy transcription. The cadenza appears to be a mere jumble of notes tumbling over each other

without apparent order. While a coloratura singer might not gain any important pointers in technique by studying this singer, yet for spontaneous, ecstatic expression of the sheer joy of living he is without a rival.

The intervals of the Chewink's song may differ greatly, as may also the number of repeated notes, even to the total omission of them, but the general form is fairly constant. Still further reducing the song to the first note with its preceding grace-note, and we have his call—"Ch'wink!" or "Ch'week"! One of the first birds to note the coming of day, he is a singer whom I have studied with great interest.

For lovely, soft, velvet quality of tone—violet, some one has called it—the Bluebird is supreme. He is not much of a melodist, but there is something so appealing in his mellow voice as to endear him to all bird-lovers.

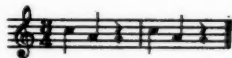
The Mourning Dove is the contralto of the bird world. Though the voice has a mournful note, there is also a suggestion of peace and restfulness in the song as it floats through the old orchard in the late afternoon.

### III. SINGLE SONG OF FROM TWO TO FOUR NOTES

*Chickadee*



*Blue Jay*



*Red-winged Blackbird*



There are several birds whose songs are very short yet possessing real interest. The three given are good examples of this class. The Chickadee, who delivers these notes in a clear whistle, though his better known "Chickadee-dee-dee" has a decided vocal quality, is often mistaken for the Phoebe, because one might easily conceive that he was trying to form the syllables of that word. But the Phoebe's voice is harsh and strident, and when once identified is never confused with the silvery tones of the Chickadee.

While the Chickadee's tones are quite legato and deliberate, these two notes of the Blue Jay, which are also whistled, in contrast to his scream of "Jay!", are more abrupt and best imitated



by whistling the two notes with a roll of the tongue between them. The Jay is a much better musician than he is often given credit for. I have recorded a large number of themes, some of them quite different in form from the example given. Of the single interval skip, I have heard seconds, thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths and octaves. Occasionally he jumps upward instead of downward.

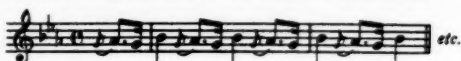
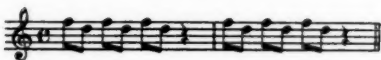
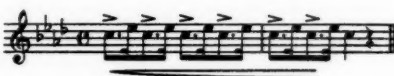
The Red-winged Blackbird has long been a subject for poets, and many are the imitative phrases which have been invented to suggest the sound of his song—"O-ka-lee!" "Kong-querree!" "Gug-lug-gee!" etc. It will be noted that they all end with long *e*, and this is, indeed, characteristic of the song. It is not always true that the song contains three notes, as I have often heard a song with but two. Sometimes, too, the last note, which is a long drawn out, quavering tone, would alter a bit in pitch, producing a four or five note theme. There is a liquid quality in the song of this bird, who lives commonly in swamps and marshes, which deserves more than passing comment.

Just what factors have contributed to produce the characteristic style of a song of a given species is an interesting study in itself. Of course, when a style has once been formed, it is perpetuated largely through imitation, modified by hearing songs of other species. Caged wild birds which have never heard the songs of their own species are not apt to sing the songs of their kind, but with their inherited vocal quality will produce songs entirely their own. But there seems to be a good deal of reason for the belief that, in the origin of songs, sounds of nature, such as wind and water, and the voices of animals which were commonly heard, entered largely into the formation both of tone qualities and of song forms. The ornithologist Wilson writes:

Standing on the reedy borders of the Schuylkill or Delaware in the month of June, you hear a low crackling sound similar to that produced by air-bubbles forcing their way through mud or boggy ground when trod upon; this is the song of the Marsh Wren.

The voices of several water birds suggest the croaking of frogs, that of the Grasshopper Sparrow suggests the origin of his name, the "Quirk" of the Red-headed Woodpecker has much the quality of that of the tree-toad, while the voice of the Ostrich at a distance has been mistaken for the roar of the lion. So it is but natural that the song of the Red-winged Blackbird should have been influenced by the sound of the water lapping against the reeds and rushes which formed the support of his nest.

## IV. RAPID REPETITION OF SHORT FIGURE

*Whip-poor-will**Carolina Wren**Tufted Titmouse**Cardinal**Maryland Yellowthroat**Ovenbird*

The Whip-poor-will is a singer of nocturnes, but with no talent for thematic development. In fact, he will repeat the same theme with no variation a hundred or more times, and seemingly without renewing his breath supply. For sustained utterance he is without doubt the champion, and as for breath control, no one can touch him! He is an example of the birds whose names were suggested by the sound of their calls or songs, as are also the Chickadee, Chewink, Dickcissel, etc.

My introduction to the Carolina Wren occurred a number of years ago, as I was in my garden one morning hoeing potatoes. From a tree near by came a cry which sounded extremely like "Potato! potato! potato!" I was unacquainted with the bird at the time, in fact, I knew but little about bird-music. For several years the incident remained in my mind, and at last my curiosity as to the identity of this very discerning bird was satisfied when I heard the same song from the Carolina Wren. The notes were as given in my first example. While the figure employed in the songs of this bird vary greatly, it is readily identified, for it is always delivered with the same energy and exactness of rhythm.

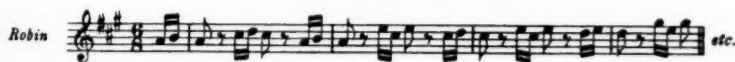
While the Cardinal is recognized as one of our most beautiful birds, many do not know that he is also a charming singer. "What cheer? what cheer? what cheer?"—he seems to be doing his

best to whistle these words. In the example given, he seemed to say: "Come here! come here! come here! pretty, pretty, pretty, pretty, pretty!" An easy and delightful way to cultivate his acquaintance is to construct a shelf just outside the window, and to keep it supplied throughout the winter with good things to eat, such as nut meats, sunflower seeds, suet and, above all, an ear of corn. No need of cracking the corn for him, for he can easily pull off the kernels and crunch them with his powerful mandibles, for he belongs to the family of Grosbeaks, who are noted seed eaters. And when in the early spring during a belated blizzard, after supplying his needs with this heat producing food, he breaks forth with this wonderful, liquid song, we feel amply rewarded for our efforts in keeping his larder stocked.

American Warblers are not noted for any great musical ability, but there are a few species which have songs possessing a certain interest. The song of the Maryland Yellowthroat, while varying as to intervals in certain individuals, has a characteristic form, and is invariably delivered with dash and sprightliness. Often it takes the form of an arpeggiated triad—5-3-1, repeated three or four times, and sounding a bit like "witchery" or "witchity." The example given is better represented by the syllables "witch-i-tee-o."

The Ovenbird, also a Warbler, received his name from his habit of building his nest upon the ground with the entrance on the side, something like a Dutch oven. If the vocal performance of the Field Sparrow is a study in *accelerando*, that of the Ovenbird is as remarkable for its *crescendo*. His first tones have a decided ventriloquial effect, seeming to come from far away. As he proceeds, the power increases in intensity until you confidently look into the tree nearest you for the singer; and the odd thing is that he may be very near or he may be some distance away. As a small boy remarked, "It sounds just as it does when I strike my hammer on a rock, and keep hitting harder and harder." This bird also has a beautiful song delivered while in the air, after the fashion of the Skylark.

#### V. CONTINUOUS, BROKEN SONG





It is worthy of mention that the four birds which I have included in this group as possessing characteristics somewhat similar, represent three distinct families. The outstanding difference between the songs of the Robin and Red-eyed Vireo, whose songs are often confused, is one of rhythm, the former commonly employing three-part time, the latter, two-part. The Robin, moreover, seems to have a song more or less definite in form, and sometimes of a definite length like that of the Grosbeak, which he repeats at intervals, while the Vireo's performance is a continuous one, so much so, in fact, that he has been nicknamed the Preacher. He seems to have no sequence or order in his utterances, but rambles on indefinitely, arriving nowhere, but all the time delivering his themes with considerable earnestness.

The Brown Thrasher, sometimes erroneously called Brown Thrush, for he is not a Thrush but a cousin of the Catbird, is one of the most interesting singers among our American birds. While the Catbird sings from his retreat in the thicket, the Thrasher takes his position upon the topmost twig of the tallest tree in the neighborhood, and sings for the edification of the entire countryside. So far as one may judge, he sings solely for the pure joy of singing, and to express his satisfaction at being alive and in the midst of plenty, with perhaps the consciousness that his chief auditor is the mate upon her nest in a hedge near by. The most interesting feature of his singing is his habit of repeating most of his themes with exactness of interval and rhythm, with an ensuing pause of perhaps a second. No wonder that it is a common conceit that he is giving suggestions to the farmer boy concerning his tasks. In fact, the themes which I have quoted suggested the words, "Here! here! he'll do it! he'll do it! get to work! get to work! quick! quick! quick! very quick! whee-o! wee-o! wee-o!"

While the Catbird sometimes repeats his themes, this is not characteristic of him. He is a mocker or imitator, so that one may hear, in his song, calls and song phrases of many other birds. One of the most remarkable performances I ever heard was given by two Catbirds, one of them mimicking, sotto voce, phrase by phrase, the song which the other was singing, being

always one phrase behind the other, thus singing one phrase while listening to another. Truly a stiff lesson in ear-training.

# VI. SEVERAL SONGS IN REPERTOIRE, EACH REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES AT LONG INTERVALS



*Song Sparrow.* (For melodies see page 244.)

While the Song Sparrow is, without doubt, as previously stated, the premier melodist, the Meadowlark must also be credited with a large repertoire of interesting and distinctive themes. His songs, while as a rule shorter than those of the Song Sparrow, are more restricted in range, and as a result possess greater uniformity of tone quality. Though he commonly sticks to one song for several repetitions, if another Meadowlark enters his domain whistling another song, he will often change to a new song himself, or perhaps alter the key of the song he had been singing. A brief period spent in listening to Meadowlarks will yield a goodly number of most interesting themes.

While it may seem strange to credit the common House Wren with singing a song which may be represented on the staff, careful observation will show that while the voice is almost constantly trilling or rapidly repeating a tone, yet there is usually a definite melodic form, which is held to quite consistently for several repetitions. And as for whole-souled singing, he sings with his whole body as well; for from the end of his vibrating bill to the tip of his drooping tail he is a-quiver with the ecstasy of his singing. Of course, when he wakens us at four o'clock in the morning, we fervently wish we had never enticed him with a ready-made nesting box to take up his quarters so near to our own, but such inconveniences will be readily forgotten in the subsequent delight of listening to his exuberant singing or watching his tireless energy in filling the gaping mouths of his offspring.

# VII. SONGS CONSISTING OF SEVERAL PHRASES SEPARATED BY LONG PAUSES



Olive-backed  
Thrush

Hermit Thrush



All things considered, there is no doubt that the Thrushes are the finest singers among our American birds. While the Song Sparrow surpasses them as a melodist, the Thrush voice is so immeasurably superior that, coupled with their real ability in creating interesting themes, they must be reckoned as the greater performers. Instead of repeating at intervals a given melody as does the Song Sparrow, the Thrushes mentioned above sing a series of themes separated by pauses, the entire series being repeated with occasional variation. Moreover, they seem to have an uncanny appreciation of harmonic sequence, as the examples will show. As in the case of the Song Sparrow, a given theme means to them a certain succession of definite pitches. A rather unusual performance of a Hermit Thrush was observed by the writer, in which the bird would sing the theme:



in the key of A, two or three themes in other keys, then the theme just mentioned in the key of B flat, followed by other themes, then reverting again to the theme in A. This series was repeated several times.

While the Wood Thrush and Hermit Thrush sing in a fairly legato manner, the Olive-back is more inclined to the portamento; in fact, his song is often nothing but a series of ascending curves, represented by a broken seventh-chord heavily slurred, as the Veery's song is a series of descending curves.

Much has been written about the wonderful voices of the Thrushes. As each species of the family differs in the form of its song, so, too, does the voice have its own distinctive quality. The Wood Thrush has a more liquid quality than the others, though the high tone with which he often closes a song has a



very thin, reedy timbre. The Hermit's voice habitually displays more reediness, though his opening long tone is fairly clear. The Veery has also a reedy quality, though full and mellow, but he lacks the melodic ability of the other Thrushes. His twilight song will linger a long while in the memory as one of the most wonderful to be heard in the northern woods. Which of the Thrushes is the finest singer is a matter of dispute, some favoring the Hermit and some the Wood Thrush, while Henry Van Dyke, referring to the Scottish Laverock, says:

I only know one song more sweet,  
The vespers of the Veery.

It is a fact which is often commented upon, that the American people have no heritage of folk-song such as has enriched the musical life of many European nations. The nearest approach to it is found in the songs of the American Negro and the American Indian, both groups of songs having originated in this country, though from alien races. May I venture to suggest that to these groups which are distinctively indigenous to this country, we add a third group which is just as truly American—the songs of American birds? While I do not advocate the extensive use of bird-melodies in art-songs, I have for some time felt that we should have a body of songs for children based upon bird-melodies and calls which should thus be distinctively our own, for as American birds differ from the birds of Europe, Asia and Africa, so their songs are peculiarly an American possession.

The importance of encouraging bird study on the part of children has been pretty generally recognized throughout the country. May I suggest, as a final word, that not the least important feature of such study should be the careful hearing of bird-songs and call-notes, for aside from the development of the aesthetic sense, what finer ear-training could be devised than the discrimination of the infinite variety of tone qualities, rhythms and melodic forms to be heard in the performances of our feathered friends of field and forest?

## NOTES VERSUS TONES

By ARTHUR GEORGE<sup>1</sup>

**T**O read, or not to read—music: that is the question. I am well aware that the instrumentalist is provided for, rather well, in the note, or staff, system; for infinite repetitions of each note of the score to its invariable place in key and finger position on the instrument makes the mere pitching of tones a virtually automatic process.

But the human throat contains no places named C, D, E, F, G, A, B; with their justly celebrated flats and sharps.

And that, to the discerning and imaginative music-master—the lover of the art for its own glorious sake—should immediately clinch my argument for a tone system. Nevertheless, the probabilities are that I must go on, beating my already diminished head against a dead wall of conservatism; that has its daily and nightly struggles with a set of difficulties that appear to be accepted as inherent in the art, while actually they are artificially set up in discouragement of our artistic ambitions by an unworkable music orthography.

This mere alphabet is habitually known as “music.” Always it is a tabulation of absolute pitches, visually unrelated to one another as melody or harmony, such relations being customarily established by instrumental experiments.

It is a fact often observed by me as an amateur chorister, in highly cultured communities, that trained singers, even professional soloists, do not read the staff system directly, in any but the simplest and most obvious melodies: they resort to a translating machine, either listening to their own painfully acquired skill on the keyboard, or that of accompanist or director, and finally getting it “by ear.”

So serious is this trouble, and so universal where reliance is had on the broken reed we call the “staff,” that I feel justified in

<sup>1</sup>Those who discovered a misprint in the note prefixed to the first number of The Musical Quarterly will have given the editor, I trust, the benefit of doubt by this time, for it was really to be “*Audietur et altera pars*” and not merely “*audiat*.” But there is a limit to every debate. Even on the merits of Sol-fa as against the “staff,” and vice versa. In other words, so far as The Musical Quarterly is concerned, the controversy, with the articles by Mr. George and Mr. Whitaker, will be *ajourné*—à la Clemenceau. Most of the “reform” schemes mentioned at the end of the article, Mr. George would agree with me, were either stupid or crazily complicated, generally both.—Ed.

telling tales out of singing school, much as I would regret to humiliate certain fine artists of my acquaintance: and they were not all vocalists.

For, to dispose of the players first, in a Rossini "Stabat Mater" number the woodwinds went merrily along in the printed key for a couple of measures, while the strings observed the injunction to take it a semitone flat: they played notes regardless; they harkened not for tone effects. In the "Elijah" rehearsal a baritone blatted forth a "ray"; his companion called it a "me" by note. The trumpeter in "The Trumpet Shall Sound," of *The Messiah*, did his little whole-tone turns in semitones. All at the final orchestra rehearsals. My foolish little imported book of *tone* characters, printed in straight lines that formed no staff picture of the tune at all, informed me instantly what was wrong. The expert professionals had to be corrected: they had *notes* which, as regards pitch and related tone values, looked all alike. It became, therefore, for them a matter of close observation of exact places on lines and spaces, with watchful calculation also of the modifying effects of signatures and accidentals. I suspect that the majority of players pay little heed to the tone relation of their own scores to those of the other players and the singers; they do not listen, and in unfamiliar works do not even have time or opportunity to perceive what the assembled effect should be.

Now for a few instances in vocal effort, all in advanced rehearsals, observed in my extremely limited experience with staff "readers," if you will pardon the quotation marks. A prominent basso, guided with piano cue from a famous Bach specialist of Pennsylvania, struck *Doh* and sang the next tone *Soh*, instead of *Lah*, in Mendelssohn's "Antigone." I offered him my funny little book, that instantly told me what he failed to accomplish. He said, "I quit that stuff twenty years ago." Alas! Twenty years too soon. Another professional basso, from Italy, and in the wholesale liquor business as a side line, sang "Mors, mors stupebit," page 35, Verdi's "Requiem," as *Soh, Fe, Fe, Fah, Fah*. I had a staff copy, and would myself have taken his word for it. But it runs from *Soh* down to *Me*, three semitones. With tone characters, I would defy any orchestra to put me out; and so could he. I have forgotten what notes they were. In "Quando Corpus" of Rossini's "Stabat Mater," which is a *cappella*, tenor and alto made an octave unison of it in the second line, where the key changes from B flat to F, at least in my "idiot's delight," as it has been called. So the pianist, discreetly in place for such an emergency, had to act as referee, breaking the clinch, pianissimo; for it was

right in the recital. And my little book told on them, instantly. The tenor, a trained solfaist, was helpless with a staff copy.

Then again, a professor of mathematics in a great university, a retired organist and a retired soloist, tenors, were automatically and unanimously agreed that, in "The Elijah" number, "Behold! God the Lord," "Onward came the Lord," second to fifth, should then repeat fourth to sixth. The professor and my "short-hand" both demanded *Fah, Fah, Te, Te, Te, Soh*; or fourth to seventh major, to fifth. Of course, the other way sounded more natural, and they made a logical stab at it. The notes conspired with Mendelssohn to trip them up. It may happen to anybody, not protected by a graphic score, if you will pardon me again.

As a matter of easily proven fact, the vast majority of us never hear the notes of music; and then only when either very familiar with the score, or gifted with absolute pitch. Nor then do they come to us with any musical value as mere notes, but always as related tones in melody and harmony: that is what music is.

I regret the apologetic attitude taken by certain advocates of what is ridiculously known as "tonic sol-fa," who qualify their argument by supporting the method, patronizingly, as an introduction to the staff. Even John Curwen, who made Britain a vast singing society by the elaboration of Miss Glover's ideas for a tone system, made of his own labors but a stepping-stone to the traditional, highly respectable and unworkable form that is our daily affliction and time waster.

I have called the staff system a cryptogram, greatly to the distress of my conventional friends. I had it out personally here in California with the eminent Bach scholar mentioned. I read him the famous "Mass in B minor," forward, backward and arpeggio; having the music, specially imported; and a note at each modulation, most of them missing in staff.

Understand that I am not a musician, and there is not to be construed a case of excess-ego in these remarks. The point is that a dub, with a scientific score, written in the terms in which music is inspired, composed, rendered and heard, can beat a trained singer armed only with a list of absolute pitch notes, that do not relate themselves to one another visually. Therefore imagine what our singers and players could accomplish with music that revealed its tone values unmistakably to all members of an ensemble, each of them knowing positively to a semitone what all of the others are doing with respect to his own tones.

I know so little of the theory of music technically, that I must reduce a phase of my argument to the tempered scale computation,

and that is bad enough. For, in the usual two clef vocal score, with a range of four octaves, we have in the staff a matter of 576 tone guesses to labor with, as against the twelve tone certainties per octave, good at a moment's notice for any key desired, of a "tonic" method. To illustrate, C may be any one of twelve such tones, according to key; C sharp or D flat another twelve. And they do say there are fifteen keys!

In a necessarily limited article I cannot do more than refer to the other and minor tomfooleries of the staff system. The whole note that fits only a four-four measure; the signature that persists through infinite modulations, such as in "The Pilgrims' Chorus" and "Come, ye Daughters" of the "St. Matthew Passion," and very commonly elsewhere; flats and sharps that produce naturals in the effective key; naturals introduced to make accidentals, and the two clefs with their two-tone variance in reading. You see that I am wholly irreverent toward well established precedent.

It is distinctly unfair to the lovers of good music to discourage their studies and exertions for the art with utterly artificial and irrational barriers that facilitate the reading of scores in no respect at all, other than an approximate chart of the general aspect of the tune. I positively do not want the straight line tonic sol-fa system; though it is infinitely superior to the staff, for singing. But it is cluttered with numbered octaves, is unpictorial and does not serve the purposes of the player adequately. It has a scientific basis, however, and it works.

My plea, therefore, is that public spirited musicians and promoters get together, design a system of twelve tone characters, preferably in two faces of type to separate adjoining voices; with time punctuation characters; the quarter-note a "whole" note, or rather tone; staff lines therefore and therewith abolished; key and modulation notes only; the characters set in the score according to pitch elevation, as nearly done, but not quite, in the staff.

For this task and purpose it is important that we take rather more than a present-day view of the question. The world will have music, and more and infinitely better music, a thousand years from now, when extant compositions will be museum curios, and our greatest musicians and publishers and impresarios will be but faintly memorized names and biographic sketches. It is true that posterity has never done anything for us, but at least they have never done us any harm; and it is hardly fair to load them up with an incubus against their uses and expression of the finest of the arts.

Besides, we are also posterity, and have suffered enough, while our best music gathers dust on library shelves, understudied vitiatingly by a heavy and increasing tonnage of transient inanities and disturbances of the musical peace. Because there is no piano handy to let us find out what Bach, Haydn, Handel, Beethoven, Tschaikowsky, Grieg, Verdi and the other great builders of tonal rhymes and rhythms have been trying to give us.

I mean, of course, a well considered music system that will serve as well as possible every musical purpose in the one form, either for vocal or instrumental solo, choral or keyboard work.

Besides, there ought to be millions in it.

#### ON THE READING OF MUSIC

Choir rehearsals everywhere, where the staff is used, consist of an endless series of experiments with tonally meaningless absolute pitches, retarding the work and wearying immeasurably the director, the inevitable keyboard translator and the singers.

Once the composition is thoroughly learned, however, all that is needed for recital is a starting pitch. Notes are forgotten. If the range is too high or too low, take a lower starting note, or a higher, and proceed exactly as it is written, on a transposed grouping of notes, but the same tune.

Which is to say, substantially, that music is not inspired, composed, interpreted or heard as sets and series of notes, but as melody and harmony of tones, natural or sophisticated scale, but never audibly having reference to any notes, as melody or harmony—as a tune.

All of which is trite truism to a musician of any attainment at all. Yet the reminder seems to be very much in order, by reason of the traditional, round-about, established methods we employ in preference to the obviously direct idea of reading tones, that the British people use successfully, in an utterly unpictorial straight line score.

The difference, reduced to a tempered scale computation, is that they employ at the most seventeen tone characters, shifted in pitch uniformly by means of the keynote; we, in the staff system, are confronted with notes, each of which is, according to key and unnamed modulation, any one of twelve or twenty-four tones and semitones of the scale.

While in the despised "tonic solfa" a tuning fork and the tone-pitching intuition of the singers, reading tones as tones, get rapid and certain results, each voice part a visible and audible cue for



every other; we, classically correct and futilely fatalist, listen and listen and listen again to the interpretations of the keyboard, haltingly reading the time, and largely memorizing the tune "by ear."

And then there is the other clef, its other form of note readings and its confusing two tone skip, easily disposed of by means of a ledger line and a new space between staves.

And the "whole note," poor thing; too fat to go into a short measure, and too short to fill even a five-four; and to be inconsistently repeated in order to be sustained beyond its theoretical wholeness.

And the whole note and the half-note and the quarter-note and the eighth and so on: each time-size looking exactly the same under all of the twelve tone conditions, the most immediately important detail, the tone value to be computed or remembered from a previous occurrence, with a confusing new set of calculations should the "accidentals" cause a modulation, contradicting the signature.

If it is true that the best art is that which conceals art, then surely the staff system of concealing the art of music in a cryptogram takes "top hole."

We are in this situation at the moment: provided with a system that players can use rather well for mechanical reasons, and that singers, unequipped with note places in head or throat or lungs, cannot use at all. Britain, on the other hand, must resort to two systems, each workable separately for voice or instrument, but not mutually translatable at sight.

On both sides of the ocean we are without the one system that singers could use both for its tonal and pictorial aspects; and that players who are musicians, reading tones, should be able to refer instantly to their invariable note places on the instrument in each given key; therefore modulating to a stated passing key without any conscious idea of transposed readings.

This work, so far as I know, is yet to be done with authority and completeness. It is not a task for the amateur or the merely struggling professional, but rather for a college of cardinals in the art—for master musicians to bend their highest efforts to, under the full authority of the music world.

Therein perhaps lies our greatest difficulty; because the recognized masters have comparatively little to contend with in the staff, it appears strange to them that the common run of us find it a confounding thing to deal with. But, as the politician says, "it is a condition, not a theory, that confronts us." We cannot read music, because we get no music to read. Staves and notes

and bars and rests and ties and braces and other haberdashery in plenty, but nothing in the score that tells graphically what tone of that particular scale the note is intended to be. It becomes a job of cross-reference and calculation, without the machine and the expert operator to tell the ear what the voice is to do, while in a large minority of the lines the signature is definitely contradicted by the "accidentals;" the "natural" sometimes an "accidental;" the sharp or flat another time a natural, in the effective key. It must be admitted that the alleged keynote is often a theory, rather than a working condition. Sometimes, under test, it is discovered not to be the key, for a few lines or more.

Just a sketch of the constructive side of the argument. For all practical musical purposes we need not more than twelve tone characters, preferably new in form and reserved for musical uses. They may suggest the tone letters of the familiar scale, doh, de, ray, re, me, fah, fe, soh, se, lah, le and te. That is a chromatic scale, instantly available for any key. They may be advisedly engraved in two faces of type, to distinguish adjoining voices, which occasionally meet and exchange altitudes, and are found a staff-confusion very commonly. These, unqualified in the score, should be quarter-notes in time value, that being practically the modern whole note. They are readily extended, beat by beat, with beat divisions and sustaining beat dashes, terminated by eighth, sixteenth or thirty-second tacet characters in the last beat; the same being used as tacets in a beat initially silent, with the same quarter-tone character moved to the right, with or without a following tacet.

The point in this detail is that added beat time for a tone is better shown by succeeding time punctuations than in the form of the note, since this cannot sustain indefinitely, and must be incontinently repeated. It also confuses the score by such repetitions; and by obscuring its own beat values, in the case of a half or whole note.

Then, having our set of tone characters, the printer sets them in the elevation lines corresponding to their relative pitch, which is the one redeeming feature *approximated* by the staff. That is not essential to a tone system, but is desirable for instrumental work and visual suggestion for the vocalist; also dispensing with the figuring of the outside octaves necessary in straight line sol-fa.

Now wipe out your staff lines, and of course your spaces. You positively do not need them any more. The tone character tells the tune. The key note, by name, tells the point of beginning for each starting tone of each voice or each instrument. Really,

it won't bother you a day, hardly. That is, if you are a musician, and fairly bright. For I, a mere and very occasional amateur singer, can take Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Dvořák, Rossini—any of those top notch fellows, in the common print shop tone system named, with no hint of a picture of the tune, and read them at first sight, just as you read a story; except that I or any solfaist can back track from the end, or jump from voice to voice at a moment's notice. We get our music precisely in the terms in which we hear it. The tone character, following a brief period of training, tells the vocal cords and the lungs, as it were, what sort of combination to put over; it is done intuitionally, and it would be a conscious effort to do it wrong. With staff, it is a conscious and distinctly mathematical effort to do it right. In fact, the staff system is a disgrace to the art; for the good and ample reason that it does not work.

Lest some far-sighted, competent lover of music should get my point by the remotest chance—I am becoming a cynic from experience with the professors—there is a small and vital detail to be attended to. As hinted, the human throat is not fitted for staff purposes—an oversight of nature. It contains no key or fret; a note, as a note, means nothing in its young life. Therefore, in the case of a modulation, the voice must have an intuition guide from the passing key to the new or transient key of the modulation, and from that again to the next. Therefore the bridge tone; to be inserted, preferably, between closely set bars, just to indicate the pitch of the next tone as if written in the passing key. Of course, being in a new key effectively, each succeeding tone has a new name for its note pitch.

Regard the tone, and you have music that a musician can read; putter with notes, and you are into higher mathematics, and the composer, not an absolute pitch genius, cannot read his own work.

This is iconoclasm, to be sure. And if to be conventional is to be right, regardless of results, then staff must rule forevermore, and the congregation will just begin to get the idea of the new tune about the last stanza, if it is a good, long Methodist hymn.

The editor informed me a few years ago that he had personally examined many different schemes at the Library of Congress designed for the circumvention of this eminently respectable and traditional accretion of technicalisms. Surely, if staff were but fairly and reasonably workable, such a number of inventors would not have wasted their time trying to show it up and get rid of it.

We have shiploads of the world's best music scattered around in private, professional and public libraries of our country, but for all the good it is to any ordinary musician, singer or player, who attempts to sit down at a table and actually read it, it might about as well be written in cuneiform or Chinese; with a certain advantage at least in the latter case, wherein each character always means the same thing, they tell me.

## A REPLY TO "TONIC-SOLFA : PRO AND CON"

By W. G. WHITTAKER

IT seems like harking back many years to find discussion again on the question of the relative merits of the new and the old notation, but Mr. Fuller-Maitland's article in the January, 1921, *MUSICAL QUARTERLY* contains so many extraordinary statements that it is difficult to see how they can remain unchallenged.

Let me clearly state in the first instance that I am not a user of TSF. In my younger days I was strongly opposed to it, but when brought face to face with practical work in choral societies and choirs of all sorts, with children in singing classes and with adult singing pupils, I was driven, like many other musicians, to seek refuge in the aid given by a system extraordinarily accurate in its notation, and devised in its teaching methods with insight rarely known in the musical-educational world. I have a great respect for the musical knowledge and experience of the veteran past critic of "The Times," but no man who has worked with singers to any extent could possibly have made statements such as are contained in the article in question. Every practical musician will agree with his summary that "perhaps the most useful work of TSF is as the best possible introduction to the staff notation."

"The attempt to set up the TSF system as a rival to it (the staff) is bound to meet with ultimate failure."

But it is scarcely true that a "great number of people in England" "tell you, with a smirk of complacency, that they do not sing from the old notation." There may have been a great number twenty or more years ago, but the number is steadily diminishing, and they are rarely met with now. The people one meets only too frequently are applicants for choral society membership and solo singers, who "tell you, with a smirk of complacency," that they know nothing of TSF, and they are always people who cannot read staff notation of the standard of the junior classes in an elementary school. They cannot keep time, they merely guess the intervals of a tune, they have no systemized knowledge whatsoever. One sees them sitting superiorly

inactive in choral societies when the conductor explains that a passage such as A sharp, B sharp, C double sharp is merely *d r m*, and begs his singers to pencil these simple aids above the complicated notation. The staff-by-solfa singer generally gets the passage right the next time, but the pure staffist merely guesses again and usually guesses wrongly.

Three strange statements occur in the paragraph beginning on page 69. Mr. Maitland speaks of the difficulty "of reading anything like a score so as to give the composite idea of a harmonic progression by the sight of four rows of figures." But the difficulty is simply that Mr. Maitland was brought up to read staff, whereas a solfaist is brought up to read the other notation. It reminds one of the astonishment of an English girl who heard a Parisian child talking French:—"Isn't she awfully clever to talk a difficult foreign language so easily?" As a matter of fact, harmonic progressions are read in a solfa score by exactly the same process that a staffist of experiences uses; the latter does not read individual notes, but recognises by signs in the context what the progression is, say a dominant chord followed by the tonic; he knows it, whether it is in the key of F or of F sharp, and he can recall instantly the mental effect. Only, a solfaist's path is made easy for him by his notation; there is only one way of writing the dominant chord, only one way of writing the tonic chord; in staff there are sixteen ways with key-signatures alone, not counting those with accidentals. I repeat, I do not use solfa notation myself, but an unprejudiced study of the elements of harmony in the letter method soon reveals that multitudes of difficulties are cleared out of the track of the learner.

The second statement is even more amazing, that "the representation of rests, and in general of the endurance of notes, as well as of silences, is imperfect." Anything more simple and teachable than the solfa method of indicating the lengths of both notes and rests cannot be conceived. While none of us would willingly part with our old familiar friends the crotchet and the minim, one has only to teach both notations to a class of young people to find out how relatively easy John Curwen's plans are.

"The absence of any indication as to the length of time during which the one part upon which the singer's attention has to be fixed, should keep silence, makes it exceedingly difficult to impart even to an intelligent choir any composition of a polyphonic character." This is the strangest statement of all. All tonic-solfa copies are printed in score, all bars of rest are clearly given, for the duration of these the singer simply keeps his or



her eye upon the nearest line. Where is the difficulty? No choirtrainer has ever found one. In reality, it is much simpler than in staff notation; the letter system is more economical of space, the lines are therefore closer together, the eye has not to travel so far in search of a line to follow, and moreover a soprano or alto has not to think of a bass stave while following, during rests, a part for that voice. I fail utterly to see how this distinguished critic could have made such an accusation.

In modern teaching of TSF it is not customary to consider the relative minor as "merely an offshoot as it were of the major scale, to be constantly referred to the keynote of that scale instead of to its own keynote." It is pretty commonly recognized now that the most satisfactory plan is to teach the major and relative minor scales as equals, merely groups of notes chosen from a common body, one with doh as keynote, the other with lah as keynote. This is historically the correct method. If M. d'Indy is right in the theory he propounded in one of his *Schola Cantorum* addresses, that the student should live through briefly the various phases which musical art in its evolution to modernity has itself passed through slowly, and that the historical perspective thus gained is of infinite value to the development of musical consciousness, then this plan of teaching the two fundamental scales of music of recent centuries is sound. Most certainly it is practically of much value.

Mr. Maitland's table of the method of noting the modes is such obviously special pleading, that the present writer had to read it through several times to see if it was really meant seriously. For purposes of reference Mr. Maitland's table is given below, but with the letter-names, such as would be used by any teacher, given on the right hand side in each case. No further comment is needed.

I	III	V	VII	IX
<i>Dorian</i>	<i>Phrygian</i>	<i>Lydian</i>	<i>Mixolydian</i>	<i>Æolian</i>
d <sup>1</sup> r <sup>1</sup>	d <sup>1</sup> r <sup>1</sup>	d <sup>1</sup> f	d <sup>1</sup> s	d <sup>1</sup> l
ta d <sup>1</sup>	ta r <sup>1</sup>	t r <sub>1</sub>	ta f	ta s
l t	la d <sup>1</sup>	l r	l r <sub>1</sub>	la f
s l	s t	s d	s r	s r <sub>1</sub>
f s	f l	fe t <sub>1</sub>	f d	f r
ma f	ma s	r <sub>1</sub> l <sub>1</sub>	r <sub>1</sub> t <sub>1</sub>	ma d
r r <sub>1</sub>	de f	r s <sub>1</sub>	r l <sub>1</sub>	r t <sub>1</sub>
d r	d r <sub>1</sub>	d f <sub>1</sub>	d s <sub>1</sub>	d l <sub>1</sub>

Mr. Maitland's lack of real knowledge of practical TSF work is shown by the lowest three names he gives in the Phrygian Mode.

No teacher would dream of using *d de ma* under any circumstances whatsoever. It falsifies all principles of teaching. *d ra ma* has an entirely different mental effect, and though difficult, is quite singable; *d de ma* is impossible.

Mr. Maitland's criticism of the method of noting modulation is again special pleading. "Every slightest modulation" does NOT require a shifting of the mind to the new tonic. It is only where a really definite key-change takes place that a change of tonic is marked. The charm which is exercised by a gradual change in the hearer's attitude towards a new key, of which Mr. Maitland speaks so excellently, is not interfered with in the least by the notational plan, any more that it would be by a change of key-signature in staff during such a passage. Notation is not music, but merely the means of writing music. The difficulty which Mr. Maitland finds in "reading anything like a score" does not qualify him to speak definitely on this point. The "elaborate mental calculation to the effect that the note he has approached as Soh is for the next few bars to be thought of as Doh" is infinitely less puzzling than the elaborate mental calculations that a staff reader has to go through when passages are written in a key which differs from the key-signature. If Mr. Maitland had ever tried to teach sight-singing, he would have found that here he is trying to make a mountain out of a molehill. Curiously enough, his position is completely refuted by a series of piano-forte classics issued under the editorship of the late Mr. Stanley Hawley, in which the chief merit is the disappearance of untold numbers of accidentals by the simple expedient of changing the key-signature where the key does really change. I believe that in a single line upwards of 100 accidentals are deleted. Now this is exactly the same process as is adopted in John Curwen's plan of indicating modulation. Let the reader try the experiment of writing bars 34 to 37 of Chopin's Nocturne in D flat, Op. 27, No. 2, changing the signature to three sharps. Almost every accidental disappears. An experienced player does not read all these signs, he merely "senses" the key, and the fixed key-signature disappears from his mind. But the beginner has to plod slowly through the bewildering forest of accidentals. But then in the case of the piano music it was Chopin who caused the "elaborate mental calculation" necessary to read hundreds of redundant signs, so criticism must be silenced! It is acknowledged by the present writer that unnecessary complication can be caused in solfa notation by pettifogging changes of key, but these are not usually indulged in by translators, especially nowadays.

A strange statement is the following: "Perhaps some bold TSF advocate has tried to put Bach's B Minor Mass into this notation, but, if so, I am sure that most people who have attempted to learn it by that notation will have flown to the safe simplicity of the staff." If Mr. Maitland had ever tried to teach a large choral society works such as Bach's B Minor Mass, he would never talk of the "safe simplicity of the staff" or of people flying from TSF to the customary notation. Perhaps I may be allowed to state that I have taught this work, both Passions, more than a fourth of the existing church cantatas of the master, practically every important classical choral work from Byrd to Brahms, and numerous modern British works by Holst, Vaughan Williams, Grainger, Dale, Elgar, Bantock, Delius and others. If I had to choose between a choir of solfaists using the despised translation, and a choir of staffists with no knowledge of solfa, there would not be a moment's hesitation. Let me quote an instance. When Dr. Coward's Sheffield Choir had to learn Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis" (which is more difficult chorally than Bach's B Minor Mass) with other works in a single month of rehearsals, the work was translated into TSF, and lithographed specially.

Mr. Maitland said in the "Times": "This truly magnificent singing of truly magnificent music was a fitting climax to an interesting festival."

An ideal choir is one in which all members sing from staff, and have a good knowledge of solfa as a foundation. Over and over again, particularly in rehearsing modern works, with their awkward intervals, terrifying notation and innumerable key-changes, a reference to solfa is the only sure means the choir-trainer has of obtaining correctness from his singers. The solfa-trained reader jots down on his or her copy the letter-names of the notes, and most of the difficulty is conquered. Hours of talk about perfect fifths and augmented seconds and the like would not have anything like the effect of an explanation on the lines mentioned. Choir-members, or any other vocalists, do not sing by a mental calculation of intervals, but they reproduce series of sounds which they have become familiar with as the result of experience. Solfa simplifies that process better than any other plan invented by the wit of music-teaching man.

Mr. Maitland says that the "weightiest objection which trained musicians have to TSF is based on the quality of the music provided for its pupils." Now, in the early days of the spread of the movement, there was a tremendous demand for teachers, and any man who had acquired any fluency in sight-

singing, which was easily obtained through attendance at a few classes, could find work as a teacher of ardent disciples. It was inevitable that the taste of many of these people should be miserably poor. The result was that the standard of music used and published was very low. But that day has passed away; there are no longer multitudes of singing classes held throughout the length and breadth of the land. In spite of the bad music taught, the extinction of these classes has been a great loss to the world of choral music. The level of sight-reading of applicants for membership in choral societies is much lower than it was; there are few public classes in which adults can revise what they learned in childhood and increase their skill to qualify for good choirs. A deputation waited upon the Board of Education in January of last year to complain that the standard of sight-singing of students entering training colleges had fallen enormously during the last twenty years. With all their faults, these amateur workers laid foundations on which every choral society built, and the need of a modern equivalent of the wave of popular enthusiasm started by John Curwen and his disciples is painfully evident to-day. No one can argue that the standard of music in choirs and singing classes at this day is what it ought to be, but how can that be charged to the account of the notation! It is the same argument as was used by a Member of Parliament against an educational bill at the beginning of last century, that if the people learned to spell they would read atheistical books, and turn into unbelievers. It was better for their souls that they should never learn to read at all, but remain attached to the church. Is no bad music issued in staff? Do "trained musicians" wish to abolish staff notation because fox-trots, ragtimes, sentimental drawing-room ballads and the like are played and sung by those people who have unfortunately learned crotchets, quavers, and clefs? I am afraid that if lists of the music published in both notations were made and collated, the larger proportion of bad music would be credited to the hallowed notation of "trained musicians."

I agree that it is "a sad experience to go into a school in some part of England where all the children's voices are of a beautiful quality and all or nearly all possess strong musical instinct, and to hear the kind of trash which is being forced into their throats." That is not the fault of TSF, but of the conditions under which teachers are selected and trained for their profession, the system of examinations which insists on cramming in essential subjects, and dropping such things as music, and

which prevents many intending teachers from even getting the customary training of a child in music in elementary and secondary school and in pupil teachers' centre, because music does not count in marks [credits].

The writer has had a quarter of a century of experience in a University where teachers are trained, and he finds that the best classification he can make at the beginning of a new session is by the amount of reading ability in solfa that students possess. If they know the letter notation well, they can advance very greatly in general musicianship during their short College course and the miserably small amount of time available for musical work; if not, then the task is a difficult one indeed. And Mr. Maitland blames TSF for poor taste in songs in schools!

Another statement shows that Mr. Maitland is not familiar with the principles of TSF teaching. He says that the "singer's mind is always hampered by the temptation to repeat, instead of the words put down for him, the actual syllables which he is accustomed to associate with the notes he sings." Every teaching manual of TSF insists that the syllables must be only a means to an end, and that sufficient practice should be given in singing to laa. It is a first principle of teaching that one thing should be mastered at once. Any one who has taught in a school knows that the quickest and surest way of learning a song is to teach the tune by solfa (whether from the letter notation, or from the staff by means of these syllables), then have it sung to laa, and then to the words. Let any elementary or secondary school-music teacher be asked as to whether children prefer solfa syllables or words when they know a song!

There is a cryptic remark in the last paragraph of Mr. Maitland's article. "The difficulty of expressing any of the more complicated kinds of music, and the kind of attitude generally adopted by Solfaists towards real music, has caused the managers of many festivals to forbid any competing choir to use TSF." If the music for the competition cannot be translated into TSF, why is there need to forbid it? Will not the edict keep Solfaists out of the festival and allow them to remain wallowing in their own mire? If a festival is to be for the elect, why hold it at all? The statement is difficult to understand; perhaps it is meant that in sight-singing competitions staff is insisted on. If so, it is a very desirable necessity. The grave mistake of teachers in the past has been to neglect to lead their students to the conventional notation. Fluency is so easily obtained that it is a temptation to go no further.

In conclusion, a statement of the attitude, not of the writer alone, but of the vast majority of choir-trainers and teachers of class-singing in the country, towards this question. No system has ever been designed which is so valuable, in psychological insight, in practical utility, in ease of handling, in adaptability to the general mass of the taught, as John Curwen's TSF. The easiest approach to ear-training, sight-singing, musical appreciation, is through its doors. The easiest and most effective way of teaching staff notation is to take every step in solfa first and then apply it immediately to staff notation. The two notations should exist side by side. Where staff only is taught, or where the amount of solfa reading is strictly limited, staff reading suffers in fluency and certainty. While misplaced enthusiasm in the early days of the movement led to a certain amount of evil amidst much good, it would be folly for the present generation of teachers and choral conductors and private singing-teachers to abandon the benefits it can bring. TSF notation should be strictly used as a means to an end, that end being the reading from staff, the cultivation of ear and musical susceptibility.



## HEINRICH HEINE'S MUSICAL FEUILLETONS'

HEINE was an enthusiastic admirer of Napoleon, as is witnessed by his famous "Two Grenadiers," with which Schumann's song setting is identified for all time, and which was written in 1819, when he was preparing for his university studies in Düsseldorf. Sitting on a bench in the old *Hofgarten* in that city, he heard behind him "confused voices which lamented the fate of the poor Frenchmen who, dragged off to Siberia subsequent to the Russian campaign, were kept there for many years, although peace had long since been declared, and were only now returning home." In Paris, in 1837, he could not help but hear the Napoleonic ballads, notably the songs which were sung to Béranger's popular texts, and his word picture of the blind Napoleonic veteran of Dieppe, who sang them nightly to the waves, has every right to be included in his feuilletons.

It occurs in the letters from Paris of the year 1837, written during May, "Concerning the French Stage," and will be found in the fifth letter, "Napoleon's Importance for the French Stage," with its happy view of Napoleon in French popular song:

I have never seen a vaudeville in which Napoleon sang. Everyone else sings. I have even heard old Fritz, *Frédéric le Grand*, singing in vaudeville, and singing such wretched verses that one might believe he had written them himself. In fact, the verses of these (French) vaudevilles are beneath contempt, but not their music, especially in pieces in which peg-leg veterans sing the Emperor's greatness as a general and his sorrowful end. The gracious lightness of vaudeville in such cases takes on an elegiac-sentimental tone which might move even a German. The poor texts to these *Complaintes* are then adapted to those familiar melodies to which the people sings its Napoleonic songs. The latter are echoed here in every place, one might believe they float in the air, or that the birds sing them in the branches of the trees. These elegiac-sentimental melodies are continually in my mind, as I hear them sung by young girls, little children, crippled soldiers, with all sorts of accompaniments and every kind of variation. It was the blind invalid of the citadel of Dieppe who sang them most touchingly. My dwelling lay at the very foot of the citadel of Dieppe where it projects out into the sea, and there, on those dark walls, the old man sat for nights at a time and sang the deeds of the Emperor Napoleon. The ocean seemed to listen to his songs, and

<sup>1</sup>Continued from the January, 1922, number. As there remarked, the Feuilletons were translated from the German by Mr. Frederick H. Martens, who also wrote the connecting notes.—Ed.

the word *gloire* always progressed so solemnly across the waves, which sometimes swirled up in admiration and then silently continued on their nocturnal way. When they reached Saint Helena, perhaps they greeted that tragic rock with reverence, or flung their billows against it in sorrowful displeasure. Many a night I stood at the window and listened to him, the old invalid of Dieppe. I cannot forget him. I can still see him sitting on the old wall, while the moon comes forth from the dark clouds, and floods him with a melancholy radiance, the Ossian of the Empire!

### THE GRAND OPERA : ROSSINI AND MEYERBEER

To the "Musical Reports from Paris" belongs Heine's account of "The First Performance of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*!"

Paris, March 1, 1836.

Yesterday was a strange day for the fine world of Paris—the first performance of Meyerbeer's long yearned for "*Huguenots*" was given at the Opéra, and Rothschild gave his first great ball in his new hotel. I wished to enjoy both delights on the same evening, and overindulged to such an extent that I still feel as if I were intoxicated, thoughts and pictures staggering around in my head, and hardly able to write, being so deafened and weary. There can be no question of judgment. One had to listen to "Robert le diable" half a dozen times before one penetrated all the beauties of this masterwork. And critics declare that Meyerbeer has shown still greater perfection of form, a more ingenious carrying-out of detail in "*Les Huguenots*." He is probably the greatest living contrapuntist of the present day, the greatest artist in music; and this time he comes forward with entirely novel formative creations, he brings forth new forms in the realm of tone, and offers new melodies, quite extraordinary ones, though he does not do so in anarchic plenteousness, but where and when he wishes, at the place where they are needed. Herein he differs from other genial musicians, whose wealth of melody really betrays their lack of artistry, for they allow themselves to be carried away on the flood-tide of their melodies, and obey rather than command their music. Meyerbeer's artistic sense was with entire correctness compared with Goethe's yesterday, in the foyer of the Opéra. Only, in contrast to Goethe, the love of his art, for music, has taken on such a passionate character in the case of our great master, that his admirers are often concerned for his health. The oriental simile of the candle which consumes itself while giving light to others is truly applicable in this man's case. He is also the declared enemy of all that is unmusical, all dissonances, all bawling, all squeaking, and the most amusing tales are told regarding his antipathy for cats and caterwauling. The very presence of a cat is enough to drive him from the room, and even causes him to fall into a faint. I am convinced that Meyerbeer would die for a musical article of faith as others would for a religious one. Yes, I am of the opinion that if an angel blew his trumpet out of tune on the Day of Resurrection, Meyerbeer would be capable of lying still in his grave, and not taking part in the general rising of the dead. Owing to his enthusiasm for the cause, he is sure to defeat the small

opposition which, called forth by the colossal success of "Robert le diable" has since then had sufficient leisure to unite, and which is sure to intone its most malicious songs of dispraise at this new triumph of his. Hence you must not be astonished if a few blaring discords are audible among the general cries of applause. A music publisher who is not the publisher of the new score will probably be the little focal point of this opposition, supported by some musical reputations which have long since faded out or have never shone.

It was a wonderful sight, yesterday evening, to behold the most elegant public of Paris, festively attired, gather in the great hall of the Opéra with trembling expectancy, with serious respect, almost with devotion. (In the posthumous "Thoughts and Fancies," Heine declares: "Meyerbeer is the musical *maître de plaisir* of the aristocracy.") All hearts seemed moved. This was music. And then the Rothschild ball! Since I did not leave until four o'clock this morning, and have not yet slept, I am too greatly wearied to give you an account of the scene of this fête, the new palace built altogether in the Renaissance style, and of the astonished guests who wandered about it. These guests, as is the case at all the Rothschild *soirées*, consisted of a strict selection of aristocratic specimens, calculated to impress by reason of their great names and high rank, the women in particular by their beauty and dress. As regards this palace and its decorations, it unites all which the spirit of the sixteenth century could conceive, and for which the money of the eighteenth century could pay. In it the genius of the plastic arts competes with the genius of Rothschild. They have been working continually for the past two years at the palace and its decorations, and the sums expended upon it are said to have been enormous. M. de Rothschild smiles when questioned with regard to it. It is the Versailles of the plutocratic autocracy. At the same time the taste with which everything has been carried out, as well as the costliness, must be equally admired. M. Duponchel has undertaken the direction of the decorative work and everything testifies to his good taste. In general as well as in particular the refined artistic cultivation of the lady of the house, who is not alone one of the prettiest women in Paris, and distinguished by her wit and information, but who also concerns herself practically with the plastic arts, painting in especial, is in evidence. The Renaissance, as the epoch of Francis I is called, is now the mode in Paris. All is furnished and fitted up nowadays in the taste of that time; yes, in some cases this even becomes a mania. What is the meaning of this suddenly awakened passion for that epoch of awakened art, awakened joy in life, and awakened love for the intellectual in the form of beauty? Perhaps some of the trends of our own day are indicated by this sympathy!

The ninth letter of the series "Concerning the French Stage" is devoted to: "The Grand Opéra, Rossini and Meyerbeer." It begins with Heine's definition of music.

But what is music? This question occupied me for hours last night before I fell asleep. Music is quite a peculiar matter; I might say that music is a marvel. She stands midway between thought and semblance; she stands like a twilight mediator between spirit and matter;

related to both and yet differing from both; she is spirit, but spirit demanding the measure of time; she is matter, but matter which can dispense with space.

We do not know what music is. But we know what good music is, and we know still better what poor music is; for we have heard a greater proportion of the last-named kind. Musical criticism can be based only upon experience, not upon a synthesis; it should classify musical works only according to their resemblances, and accept the impression which they make in general as a standard.

There is nothing less adequate than theorizing in music; it is true that we have rules, mathematically determined rules; yet these are not music, they are only her qualifications, just as the art of drawing and the theory of color, or even paint-brush and palette are not painting, but merely necessary means. The nature of music is revelation; it is impossible to give an accounting of it, and true musical criticism is a science of experience.

I know of nothing more unsatisfactory than a criticism by Monsieur Fétis, or by his son, Monsieur Foetus, who, *a priori*, because of the reasons last named, will add to or take away from the value of a musical work by argumentation. Criticisms of the kind, written in a species of dialect, and spiced with technical expressions, familiar only to the interpreting artist and not to the world of culture in general, lead the great mass to assign a certain amount of credit to chit-chat of its sort. Just as my friend Detmold has written a handbook on painting, by means of which one may become an art connoisseur in two hours' time, someone should write a similar book on music, and employing an ironic vocabulary of music-critic phrases and orchestral jargon, put an end to the various trade-jobs of a Fétis and a Foetus.

The best musical criticism, the only kind which really proves anything, I heard last year in Marseilles, at a table d'hôte where two travelling men were arguing the question of the day, whether Meyerbeer or Rossini were the greater master. Whenever the one adjudicated the highest excellence to the Italian, the other countered, not with dry words, but by trilling some particularly fine melodies from "Robert le diable." Whereupon the first disputant could think of no more striking reply than eagerly to sing a few fragments of the "Barbiere di Siviglia" at him, and thus it went throughout the meal. Instead of a noisy exchange of meaningless figures of speech, they gave us the most delightful table-music, and at the end I had to admit that either one should not argue about music at all, or else do so only in this realistic way.

You will notice, dear friend, that I am not annoying you with any customary phrases with regard to the Opéra. Yet in a discussion of the French stage, it is impossible to pass the latter without mention. Nor have you to fear a comparative discussion of Rossini and Meyerbeer, in the usual style, on my part. I confine myself to loving both of them, and not loving either at the other's expense. If the former, perhaps, appeals to me even more than the latter, this is only a private opinion, in no wise a recognition of superior worth. Perhaps it is a case of vices which sound in unison with other vices of my own in myself. I am by nature inclined toward a certain *dolce far niente*, and I take pleasure in reclining on flowery meads, where I may watch the calm progressions

of the clouds, and delight myself with their illumination; yet chance has so willed it that I often have been awakened from this comfortable dreaming by hard fate's ungentle poke in the ribs; that I have had to take a compulsory part in the sorrows and struggles of my time, and that then my interest was sincere and I fought with the bravest . . . Yet I do not know how to express it, my impressions always managed to maintain a certain apartness from the impressions of the others. I knew how they felt, but I felt quite differently from them, and no matter how lustily I exercised my war-steed, and how mercilessly I hewed into the foe, yet the fever, the joy or the terror of battle never took possession of me.

I was often disturbed with regard to my inward peace of mind, for I noticed that my thoughts were elsewhere while I was exchanging blows in the thickest of the partisan battle, and at times I thought myself like Ogier, the Dane, who fought against the Saracens while in a dream. Rossini cannot help but appeal more to a person of this type than Meyerbeer; and yet there are times when, even though he may not give himself up to it completely, the music of the latter will receive his enthusiastic homage. It is on the waves of the Rossinian music that the individual joys and sorrows of mankind rock most comfortably to and fro; love and hatred, tenderness and longing, jealousy and pouting, it is all the isolated feeling of the individual. Hence the predominance of melody is characteristic of Rossini's music, which is always the proximate expression of an individual emotion. In Meyerbeer, on the other hand, we find that harmony is the overlord; the melodies die away, nay, are drowned, in the flood of the harmonic masses, as the individual sensations of individual people are drowned in the collective feeling of an entire nation. Our souls like to plunge into these harmonic streams when the woes and joys of all humanity take possession of them, and they take sides in the great social questions. Meyerbeer's music is social rather than individual; the grateful present, which rediscovers its inner and external feuds, its division of mind and struggles of the will, its need and its hope in his music, celebrates its own passion and enthusiasm while it is applauding the great *maestro*. Rossini's music was better fitted for the period of the Restoration, when, after great battles and disappointments, the sentiment on behalf of their great collective interests was relegated to the background by men who were jaded, and the sense for the individual ego could once more enter into its legitimate rights. Rossini would never have attained his great popularity during the Revolution or the Empire. Robespierre might, perhaps, have accused him of writing anti-patriotic, modernist melodies, and Napoleon would surely not have made him a bandmaster in the *Grande armée*, where he had need of a collective enthusiasm. . .

Poor Swan of Pesaro! the Gallic cock and the imperial eagle would, perhaps, have torn you limb from limb; and more suited to you than the battle-fields of a civic virtue and of glory was the calm lake, along whose shores the cultivated lilies nodded peacefully to you, and where you could quietly scull up and down, beauty and loveliness in your every motion. The Restoration was Rossini's day of triumph, and even the stars of heaven which were keeping holiday at the time, and no longer concerned themselves with the fates of nations, harked to him with delight. The July Revolution, in the meantime, has caused a great commotion

in heaven and on earth; stars and men, angels and kings, aye, our Lord God Himself, have been torn out of their state of peace, once more have a great deal of business on hand, have neither leisure nor sufficient peace of mind to delight themselves with the melodies of individual emotion, and only when the great choruses of "Robert le diable" or the "Huguenots" rumble harmonically, exult harmonically, sob harmonically, do their hearts listen and sob, exult, thunder or rumble in enthusiastic unison.

This is perhaps the ultimate reason for that unheard-of, colossal applause awarded the two great operas of Meyerbeer throughout the world. He is the man of his time, and the time, which always knows how to select its men, has tumultuously raised him upon its shield and proclaimed his rule, and holds its joyous entry with him. It is not exactly a comfortable position, thus to be carried in triumph: owing to the awkwardness or unskillfulness of a single shield-bearer one may oscillate in the most ticklish manner, or even suffer severe bodily damage; the crowns of flowers which are flung at one's head, may on occasion inflict greater injury than they afford refreshment, when they do not actually defile one, coming from dirty hands; and the overweight of laurels can surely cause the sweat of anxiety to run plentifully. . . a smile of extreme irony curls Rossini's fine Italian lips when he encounters such a processional, and he then complains of his weak stomach, which is growing weaker day by day, so that he declares he can no longer eat at all.

This is hard, for Rossini was always one of the greatest of gourmands. Meyerbeer is exactly the opposite; in his personal appearance as his enjoyments, he is moderation itself. Only when he has invited friends does one find his table well set. Once when I intended to dine with him *à la fortune du pot*, I found him sitting down to a wretched dish of dried cod, which formed his whole dinner. Naturally I declared that I had already eaten.

Many have said that he is miserly. This is not the case. He is only miserly with regard to his own personal expenses. Toward others he is generosity itself, and unfortunate compatriots of his, in particular, have even abused this generosity. Philanthropy is a domestic virtue in the Meyerbeer family, especially in the mother, to whom I send all those in need of aid, and never without success. And at the same time this woman is the happiest mother to be found on earth. Wherever she goes the glory of her son is sounded, wherever she walks or stands fragments of his music flutter about her ears, and at the Opéra, finally, where a whole public voices its enthusiasm for Giacomo in the most thundering applause, her mother's heart trembles with a delight which we can hardly divine. In the whole history of the world I know of only one mother who might be compared to her, the mother of the two Saints Boromeus, who witnessed the coronation of her son in her own lifetime, and who could kneel in the church with thousands of the faithful and pray to him.

Meyerbeer is now writing a new opera to which I am looking forward with the greatest curiosity. I find the development of this genius a most remarkable exhibition. It is with interest that I follow the phases of his musical as well as of his personal life, and observe



the reciprocal effects developing between him and his European public. Ten years have now passed since I first met him in Berlin, between the university building and the guardhouse, between science and the drum, and he seemed to feel very ill at ease in this position. I remember meeting him in the company of Dr. Marx, who at the time belonged to a certain regency which, during the minority of a certain young genius who was regarded as the legitimate successor to Mozart, paid uninterrupted homage to Sebastian Bach. This enthusiasm for Sebastian Bach was not only intended to fill out the interregnum in question, but also to destroy the reputation of Rossini, most feared and hence most hated by the regency. Meyerbeer at the time was regarded as an imitator of Rossini, and Dr. Marx treated him with a species of condescension, with an affable mien of lordly superiority which made me laugh heartily. Rossinism was at that time Meyerbeer's greatest crime; he was still far removed from the honor of being antagonized for his own sake. He also wisely abstained from making any pretensions, and when I told him with what enthusiasm I had lately seen his "Crociano" performed in Italy, he smiled with capricious melancholy and said: "You compromise a poor Italian like myself when you praise me here in Berlin, the capital of Sebastian Bach."

At that time Meyerbeer had become, in fact, altogether an imitator of the Italian. His dissatisfaction with the clammy-cold, acutely mental, colorless Berlin atmosphere had early called forth a natural reaction within him; he made his escape to Italy, enjoyed life happily, gave way there altogether to his private feelings, and there composed those delightful operas wherein Rossinism is carried to its sweetest exaggeration, where the refined gold is gilded, and the lily is perfumed with a more powerful fragrance. Those were Meyerbeer's happiest days, he wrote in the glad intoxication of Italian sensuous enjoyment, and picked the lightest of flowers in life as in art.

Yet this was something with which a German nature could not content itself long. A certain home-sickness for the seriousness of the Fatherland awakened in him; while he reclined beneath Southern myrtles he was haunted by the recollection of the mystic awesomeness of Teutonic oak-forests; while meridional zephyrs caressed him he thought of the sombre chorals of the north wind—he may even have felt like Mme. de Sévigné, who, when she lived beside an orangery, and was constantly surrounded by the fragrance of orange-blossoms, commenced to yearn for the evil odors of a healthy cartful of manure. . . In short, a new reaction was experienced, Signor Giacomo suddenly turned German again, and joined himself to Germany—not the old, decaying, lived-out Germany of a narrow-minded Philistinism, but the young, generous, enfranchised Germany of a new generation, which had made all humanity's problems its own, and which, if not always bearing them on its standard, had none the less borne the great problems of humanity ineffaceably graven in its heart.

Shortly after the Revolution of July Meyerbeer came before the public with a new work, born of his genius during the birth-pangs of the revolution in question—with "Robert le diable," that hero who does not know exactly what he wants to do, and who is continually at variance with himself, a faithful picture of the moral irresolution of that

time, a time which oscillated in so tormentingly restless a manner between virtue and vice, which consumed itself between efforts and hindrances, and did not always possess the power to withstand the temptations of Satan. In no wise do I like this opera, this masterpiece of faint-heartedness. I say faint-heartedness not alone as regards its matter, but with respect to its execution as well, since the composer does not yet trust his own genius, does not dare to yield himself up to it with his whole mind, and tremblingly serves the mob instead of fearlessly dominating it. At the time Meyerbeer was called, and rightly, a timid genius. He lacked a victorious confidence in himself, he showed his fear of public opinion, the least criticism frightened him, he flattered the public's every whim, and shook hands right and left in the most eager fashion, as though he had recognized the sovereignty of the people in music, and had founded his rule on the plurality of votes, in contrast to Rossini, who, like a king by the grace of God, reigned like an autocrat in the realm of tonal art. This apprehension has never left him; he is still worried about the opinion of the public; but the success of "Robert le diable" had the fortunate consequence that he is not annoyed with this care while he is at work, that he composes with far greater confidence, and that he allows the great urge of his soul to come forth in its creations.<sup>1</sup>

It was with this extended freedom of spirit that he wrote "Les Huguenots," in which all doubts have disappeared, the inner struggle with himself has ceased and the external duel has begun whose colossal conformation astonishes us. It is with this work that Meyerbeer first won his immortal citizenship in the eternal city of the human spirit, the divine Jerusalem of art. It is in his "Les Huguenots" that Meyerbeer at last reveals himself without reserve; with fearless lines he here limns his entire thought, and dares to express in unbridled tone all that moves his breast.

What particularly distinguishes this work is the balance maintained in it between enthusiasm and artistic completion, or, better to express it, the even level of loftiness which passion and art attain in it; man and artist have here competed with one another; and while the former rings the

<sup>1</sup>A story told in the anonymous "An Englishman in Paris" offers an amusing confirmation of Heine's assertion: "It is a very funny thing," said Lord——, as he came into the *Café de Paris* one morning, 'there are certain days in the week when the *Rue Le Peletier* seems to be swarming with beggars, and, what is funnier still, they don't take any notice of me. I pass absolutely scot-free!'

"I'll wager," remarked Roger de Beauvoir, 'that they are playing "Robert le diable" or "Les Huguenots" to-night, and I can assure you that I have not seen the bills.'

"Now that you speak of it, they are playing "Les Huguenots" to-night,' replied Lord——; 'but what has that to do with it? I am not aware that the Paris beggars manifest predilection for Meyerbeer's operas, and that they are booking their places on the days they are performed.'

"It's simply this," explained de Beauvoir: 'both Rossini and Meyerbeer never fail to come of a morning to look at the bills, and when the latter finds his name on them, he is so overjoyed that he absolutely empties his pockets of all the cash they contain. Notwithstanding his many years of success, he is still afraid that the public's liking for his music is merely a passing fancy, and as every additional performance decreases this apprehension, he thinks he cannot be sufficiently thankful to Providence. His gratitude shows itself in almsgiving.'

"I made it my business to verify what I considered de Beauvoir's fantastical statement, and found it substantially correct."

tocsin of the most savage passions, the latter knows how to ameliorate nature's savage tones to the most tenderly thrilling consonance. While the great mass is moved by the inner power, the passion of "Les Huguenots," the connoisseur admires the mastery shown in its formal structure. This work is a Gothic minster, whose pillars are striving heavenward, and whose colossal dome appears to have been set up by a giant's daring hand; while the countless graciously delicate festoons, rosettes and arabesques which are spread over it like a veil of stone lace, testify to the untiring patience of a dwarf. A giant in the conception and conformation of the whole work, a dwarf in his toilsome development of detail, the architect of "Les Huguenots" is quite as much beyond comprehension as the composers of the ancient minsters. When I stood with a friend before the cathedral of Amiens not long ago, and my friend regarded this towering stone monument of giant power and tirelessly chipped dwarf patience with terror and pity, and finally asked me how it was that nowadays we could no longer manage to achieve such architectural works, I answered: "Dear Alphonse, men had convictions in those old days, we later-born humans have only opinions, and it calls for something more than a mere opinion to erect a Gothic minster."

That is the gist of it. Meyerbeer is a man with convictions. These do not so much refer to the social questions of the day, although in this respect as well Meyerbeer is more firmly grounded in his convictions than other artists. Meyerbeer, whom the princes of this earth overwhelm with all sorts of honorific distinctions, and who also appreciates these distinctions so highly, still has a heart in his breast, one which glows for the holiest interests of humanity, and he unblushingly admits his cult of the heroes of the Revolution. It is fortunate for him that many northern authorities do not understand music, otherwise they would see more than a partisan struggle between Catholics and Protestants in "Les Huguenots." Nevertheless, his convictions are not really political in their nature, and still less are they religious; no, they are not religious, his religion is purely negative, and consists only in this procedure: that he, unlike other artists, perhaps because of his pride, will not sully his lips with a lie; that he declines certain importunate benedictions whose acceptance must always be regarded as a questionable, and could never be considered a large-hearted action. Meyerbeer's true religion is that of Mozart, Gluck, Beethoven—it is music; he believes in music alone, only in this faith does he find happiness, and live in a conviction which resembles the conviction of earlier centuries in its depth, passion and endurance. Yes, I might say that he is an apostle of this religion. For he treats all that concerns his music, as it were, with apostolic fervor and urgency. While other artists are satisfied when they have created something beautiful, in fact not infrequently lose all interest in their work once it is completed, in Meyerbeer's case the greatest birth-pangs take place after delivery. He then cannot content himself until the creation of his genius has been made manifest to the rest of the people in splendid fashion; until the whole public is edified by his music; until his opera has poured into the hearts of all the feelings he wishes to preach to the entire world; until he has taken communion with all mankind. Just as the apostle, in

order to save one lone lost soul, scorns no trouble and pain, so Meyerbeer, once he learns that some one individual rejects his music, will persecute him tirelessly until he has converted him; and that one lamb saved, and though it be the most insignificant correspondent's soul, is dearer to him than the whole flock of the believing, who have always honored him with orthodox faithfulness.

Music is Meyerbeer's conviction, and that, perhaps, is the reason of all those timidities and distresses which the great master so often displays, and which not infrequently cause us to smile. He should be seen putting on a new opera; then he is the pest of all the musicians and singers whom he torments with never-ending rehearsals. He is never entirely satisfied, a single wrong note in the orchestra is for him a dagger-thrust which he thinks will cause his death. This disquietude still haunts him when the opera has already been performed, and has been received with intoxicating applause. He still continues to worry, and I do not think he will ever be quite satisfied until several people who have heard his opera have died and been buried; in their case, at least, he would have no fear of defection, these souls he would be sure of. On the days when his opera is given, the Lord God can arrange nothing to suit him. If it is cold and rainy, he worries lest Mlle. Falcon catch cold; if, on the other hand, the evening is bright and warm, he is afraid the fine weather will lure the people into the open, and that the theatre will be empty. The scrupulousness with which Meyerbeer, when his music is finally printed, makes the corrections is without comparison; his untiring mania for improvement while reading proof has become proverbial among the artists of Paris. But one must remember that music is dearer to him than all else, certainly dearer than life. When the cholera began to rage in Paris, I implored Meyerbeer to leave town as soon as possible; but he still had business to attend to which would occupy him for several days. He had to arrange the Italian libretto for "Robert le diable" with an Italian.

"Les Huguenots" is a work of conviction to a far greater degree than "Robert le diable," as regards content as well as form. As I have already observed, while the great mass is carried away with the content, the quiet observer admires the tremendous advances in art, the new forms, that are here developed. In the opinion of the most competent judges, all musicians who now wish to compose operas will be obliged to study "Les Huguenots." It is in his instrumentation that Meyerbeer has made the greatest advances. Unheard of is the treatment of the choruses, which here express themselves like individuals, and have cast off operatic tradition. Since "Don Giovanni" there has surely been no greater manifestation in the domain of tonal art than the fourth act of "Les Huguenots," where, following the horribly affecting scene of the consecration of the swords, the benediction of murderous lust is topped with a duet which goes the first effect one better; a colossal piece of daring, of which one would hardly have thought this timid genius capable, whose success, however, excites our delight in equal measure with our admiration. So far as I am concerned, I believe that Meyerbeer has not solved this problem by artistic means, but by natural ones; inasmuch as the famous duet expresses a series of emotions which never, perhaps, or never at least with such verity, have presented

themselves in an opera, for which, notwithstanding, the most ferocious sympathy has blazed up in the minds of contemporaries. For myself, I will admit that my heart never beat so wildly at any music as during the fourth act of "Les Huguenots," but that I am glad to avoid this act and its excitement, and witness the second act with far more pleasure. This is an idyl full of substance, which resembles the romantic comedies of Shakespeare, perhaps even more Tasso's "Aminta," in its loveliness and grace. In it, in fact, a gentle melancholy which sighs beneath the roses of pleasure, recalls the unhappy court poet of Ferrara. It is longing for happiness rather than joy itself, it holds no hearty laughter, but rather a smile of the heart, a heart which has a hidden wound and may only dream of health. How is it that an artist who from the cradle has had each one of the vampire cares of life fanned away from him, who, born in the lap of wealth, spoiled by his whole family, which agreed to all his wishes, even anticipated them with enthusiasm, who seemed destined for happiness far more than any other living artist—how is it that he has nevertheless experienced those tremendous sufferings that sob and sigh out to us in his music? For that which he does not himself experience no musician can express so powerfully and so movingly. It seems strange that the artist whose material needs are satisfied, is all the more intolerably afflicted with torments. Yet this is fortunate for the public, which owes its most ideal pleasures to the sufferings of the artist. The artist is the child of whom the fairytales tell, all whose tears are pearls. Alas, the world, that evil stepmother, beats the poor thing all the more mercilessly in order to make it weep as many pearls as possible.

An attempt has been made to accuse "Les Huguenots," even more than "Robert le diable," of lack of melodies. This reproach is based on an error. "One cannot see the wood because of the trees." Melody is here subordinated to harmony, and in a comparison with the purely human, individual music of Rossini, in which the relation is reversed, I have already pointed out that it is just this predominance of harmony which gives Meyerbeer's music its humanly progressive, socially modern character. In truth, it does not lack melodies, only these melodies are not allowed to appear in disturbingly abrupt, I might say, egotistic fashion. They may only serve the purpose of the whole, they are disciplined, instead of being, like those of the Italians, where the melodies are in evidence in an isolated fashion, outside the law, I might almost say, like their celebrated bandits. Only one does not notice it. Many a private soldier fights as bravely in some great battle as the Calabrese, the lonely robber hero, whose personal courage would surprise us less were he fighting in rank and file among regulars. On no account would I deny the merits of melodic predominance; but I must observe that we see one of its consequences in Italy in that indifference to the operatic *ensemble*, to the opera as a unified work of art, which is so naively exhibited that when no bravura rôles are sung, those in the boxes receive company, carry on conversations quite undisturbed, and even play cards.

The predominance of harmony in the creations of Meyerbeer is, perhaps, a necessary consequence of his far-reaching culture, comprehending the fields of thought and manifestation. Treasures were spent on

his education, and his spirit was receptive. He was initiated into all the sciences at an early age, and in this respect is also distinguished from most musicians, whose ignorance is more or less excusable, since as a rule they have lacked time and means to acquire much knowledge outside their special field. It was his nature to be a scholar, and the school of the world brought him to his highest development; he belongs to that small group of Germans whom even France must acknowledge to be models of urbanity. Such a high cultural level was, perhaps, essential if the material necessary for the creation of "Les Huguenots" was to be gathered together and shaped up with a sure mind. Yet, whether what was gained in breadth of conception and clarity of perspective did not carry with it a loss of other qualities, is a question. Culture in the artist destroys that sharpness of accentuation, that emphasis, that abruptness of coloring, that spontaneity of idea, that immediacy of emotion, which we so greatly admire in rudely limited, uncultured natures.

Culture in general is always dearly bought, and little Blanka is right: This eight-year old daughter of Meyerbeer envies the idleness of the little boys and girls whom she sees playing in the street, and recently expressed herself to me as follows: "How unlucky it is that my parents are educated! I have to learn all sorts of things by heart, from morning till night, and sit still and behave; while those uneducated children down there can run around happily all day long, and amuse themselves."

#### TENTH LETTER

Aside from Meyerbeer, the *Académie royale de musique* has few tone-poets who are worth while discussing in detail. And yet French opera is in its finest florescence, or, to express myself more correctly, it is enjoying good box-office receipts every day. This condition of prosperity began six years ago, under the direction of the celebrated M. Véron, whose principles have since been followed with the same success by the new director, M. Duponchel. I say principles, for, as a matter of fact, M. Véron had principles, the result of his meditations regarding art and science, and, just as he discovered an admirable cough-mixture in his capacity of druggist, so he discovered a curative for music as an operatic director. It seems he had noticed that in his own case a play by Franconi gave him more pleasure than the best opera; he convinced himself that the major portion of the public was inspired by the same feeling, that most people go to the opera as a matter of convention, and that they enjoy themselves there only when beautiful decorations, costumes and dances engage their attention to such an extent that they fail to hear the deadly music. Hence, the great Véron hit upon the genial idea of satisfying the people's love for the spectacular to such a high degree that they would take the same pleasure in grand opera that they would in a Franconi play. The great Véron and the great public understood one another. The former knew how to render music innocuous, and, under the caption of 'opera,' presented only splendid and spectacular pieces; the latter, the public, could attend grand opera with its wives and daughters, as befits the cultured classes, without dying of boredom. America had been discovered;



the egg stood on end; the opera-house was filled daily, Franconi was outdone and went into bankruptcy, and M. Véron became a wealthy man. The name Véron will live forever in the annals of music; he embellished the temple of the goddess, though he kicked out the goddess herself. Nothing could exceed the luxury which now predominates at the Grand Opéra, and it has become the paradise of those who are hard of hearing.

The present director treads in the footsteps of his predecessor, though he offers the most brusquely amusing contrast to him with regard to his personality. Have you ever seen M. Véron? In the *Café de Paris* or on the *Boulevard Coblence* he must have attracted your attention at times, a plumply caricaturistic figure, with hat plastered obliquely on his head, which is completely buried in an enormous cravat, whose parricidal stand-up collar rises above his ears, in order to conceal a superabundant herpetic eruption, so that his jovial red face with the small blinking eyes is only slightly visible. In the consciousness of his knowledge of human nature and his success, he rolls along with so insolent a comfort, surrounded by a court retinue of young, and at times elderly literary dandies, whom as a rule he regales with champagne and handsome show girls. He is the god of materialism and his mocking glance, scornful of the intellect, has often cut me anguishingly to the heart when I could meet him; at times it seemed to me that a quantity of small worms came crawling out of his eyes, shining and sticky.<sup>1</sup>

M. Duponchel is a spare, palely yellow man who, if he does not present a noble, at least presents a distinguished appearance. He is always sad; and looks like a professional mourner, and someone quite correctly dubbed him *un deuil perpétuel*. To judge by his outward appearance one would be more inclined to take him for the custodian of the *Père-la-Chaise*, than the director of the Grand Opéra. He always reminds me of the melancholy court jester of Louis XIII. This knight of the rueful countenance is now *maître de plaisir* of the Parisians, and I should like to eavesdrop at times when, alone in his domicile, he thinks of new jests with which to delight his sovereign, the French public; when he shakes his head in sadly-foolish fashion, so that the bells on his black cap tintinnabulate with a sigh while he is coloring the drawing of a new costume for the Falcon; and when he takes up the red book to see whether Taglioni . . . .

You look at me with astonishment? Yes, that is a curious book, whose significance it might be difficult to explain in seemly words. I can only make myself clear in this case by analogy. Do you know what a cold is to a singer? I hear you sigh, and you are thinking once more of your martyrdom: the last rehearsal has been overcome, the opera has already been announced for that evening; when suddenly the *prima donna* appears and declares that she cannot sing, her nose is running. There is nothing to be done. A heavenward glance, a tremendous theatrical look of pain, and a new billet is printed which tells the honored public that owing to the indisposition of Mlle. Schnaps the performance of "The Vestal" cannot take place, and that instead

<sup>1</sup>In Chapter IV, pp. 61-65, of "An Englishman in Paris," the reader will find a detailed, interesting and more kindly consideration of the Paris operatic manager. —*Trans.*

"Rochus Pumpnickel" will be given. It did not help the dancers, however, to announce that their noses ran, since this did not prevent their dancing; and for a long time they envied the singers this rheumatic invention which at all times gave them an opportunity of treating themselves to a holiday and their enemy, the theatrical director, to a day of anguish. Hence they petitioned God to grant them the same right of torture, and He, a friend of the ballet like all monarchs, endowed them with an indisposition which, harmless in itself, still prevented their pirouetting, and which we, according to the analogy of the *thé dansant*, would be inclined to call the dancing flux. Now when a dancer does not wish to appear, she has her indisputable pretext, just like the greatest of singers. The former director of the Opéra often damned himself when "Les Sylphides" was to be given, and Taglioni informed him that she could don no wings and tights that day, since she had a dancing flux. The great Véron, in his profound way, discovered that this dancing flux was distinguished from the running nose of the singer not alone with regard to color, but also with respect to a certain regularity, and that its periodical appearances could be calculated far in advance. God in his mercy, being the lover of order that he is, endowed the dancers with an indisposition which operates in connection with the laws of astronomy, of physics, of hydraulics, in short, of the whole universe, and hence is calculable; the running nose of the singers, on the other hand, is a private invention, the creation of a female whimsy, and in consequence incalculable. It was in this circumstance of the calculability of the periodic return of the dancing flux, that the great Véron sought a defence against the vexations of the dancers, and each time that one or the other of them caught hers, namely her dancing flux, the date of the event was carefully set down in a special book, and that is the red book which M. Duponchel was holding in his hand, and in which he could count back and determine the day on which Taglioni . . . This book, which is characteristic of the inventive ingenuity, and the ingenuity in general, of the former director of the Opéra, M. Véron, surely has its practical uses.

From the preceding remarks you will have gained an understanding of the present significance of French grand opera. It has become reconciled to the enemies of music, and the well-to-do *bourgeoisie* has made its way into the *Académie de la musique* as it has into the Tuileries; while high society has yielded the field. This radiant aristocracy, this *élite* distinguished by its rank, culture, birth, fashion and idleness, has flown to the Italian Opera, that musical oasis where the great nightingales of art still trill, where the springs of melody still rill their magic, and the palms of beauty wave in approval with their haughty fans . . . while round about there is a pale sandy desert, a Sahara of music. Only an occasional good concert raises its head in this desert, and affords extraordinary solace to lovers of the tonal art. Among concerts this winter are to be counted the Conservatory Sundays, a few private *soirées* in the *Rue de Bondy* and, in particular, the concerts of Berlioz and Liszt. The last-mentioned two are probably the most remarkable phenomena in the local world of music; I say most remarkable, not most beautiful or pleasurable. From Berlioz we are soon to receive an opera. The subject is an episode in the life of Benvenuto

Cellini—the casting of the 'Perseus.' The extraordinary is expected, since this composer has already accomplished the extraordinary. His trend of mind is in the direction of the fantastic, not combined with feeling, but with sentimentality; and he greatly resembles Callot, Gozzi and Hoffmann.

His outward appearance in itself points in this direction. It is a pity he has had his enormous antediluvian curls, this aspiring head of hair which rose above his forehead like a forest above a steep wall of rock, cut off; it was thus that I first saw him, six years ago, and thus he will ever loom in my memory. It was in the *Conservatoire de musique*, and they were giving a great symphony of his, a fantastic nocturnal piece, only occasionally lighted by a woman's gown, sentimentally white, which fluttered hither or yon, or by a sulphurically yellow flash of irony. The best thing in it was a witches' sabbath, where the devil says mass, and the music of the Catholic Church is parodied with the most horrifying, sanguinary clownishness. It was a farce, in which all the secret serpents we nourish in our bosoms hissed joyfully. My neighbor in the box, a talkative young man, pointed out the composer to me; he was sitting at the extreme end of the hall, in a corner of the orchestra, beating the kettledrum. For the kettledrum was his instrument. "Do you see that stout Englishwoman," said my neighbor, "in the front box?—That is Miss Smithson; M. Berlioz has been madly in love with that lady for the past three years, and we are indebted to this passion for the savage symphony we are hearing to-day." In fact, there in the front box sat the celebrated Covent Garden actress; Berlioz kept looking at her uninterruptedly, and whenever their eyes met he beat upon his kettledrum as if mad. When I heard his symphony again this winter at the *Conservatoire*, he was once more sitting in the background as a kettledrummer, the fat Englishwoman was once more sitting in the front box, their eyes met again—but he no longer beat his kettledrum so madly.

Liszt is Berlioz' nearest elective affinity, and knows best how to play his music. I need not tell you about his talent; his fame is European. He is without dispute that artist who finds in Paris the most unqualified admirers, but also the most eager antagonists. It is a significant sign that none speak of him with indifference. Without some positive worth one can neither arouse favorable or inimical passions in this world. Fire is needed to set people aflame, whether with hatred or with love. What speaks most highly for Liszt is the entire respect with which even his antagonists recognize his personal worth. He is a man whose character is eccentric yet noble, unselfish and without deceit. His intellectual trends are most curious: he is greatly inclined to speculation, and the investigation of the various schools which concern themselves with the solution of the great problem embracing heaven and earth, interest him even more than the interests of his art. For a long time he was aglow with the beautiful Saint-Simonian world-concept; later he was caught up in the clouds of the spiritualistic, or rather vaporous, ideas of Ballanche; now he enthuses for the republican-catholic teachings of a Lamennais, who has planted the Jacobite cap on the cross. Heaven alone knows in which spiritual stable he will find his next hobby-horse! Yet this tireless yearning for

light and the divine is praiseworthy, it evinces a sense for the sacred, for the religious. That such a restless person, driven to confusion by all the compulsions and doctrines of the time, who feels the necessity of concerning himself with the needs of all mankind, and loves to have a finger in every pot wherein God is cooking the future, that Franz Liszt is no quiet piano player for calm citizens and comfortable gossips goes without saying. When he sits at the pianoforte, throws back his hair from his forehead several times, and begins to improvise, he then not infrequently storms all too madly over the ivory keys, and a wilderness of thoughts that scale the heavens sounds out, among which, here and there, the sweetest flowers diffuse their fragrance, until one is alarmed and transfigured at the same time; yet of the two more alarmed.

I will admit that for all that I love Liszt, his music does not affect my mind pleasantly, the more so since I was born on a Sunday and see the spirits which others only hear; because, as you know, with every tone which the hand strikes on the piano the corresponding tone-figure rises in my soul; in short, because the music becomes visible to my inner eye.

My intellect is still trembling in my head as I recall the concert at which I last heard Liszt play. It was a concert for the benefit of the unfortunate Italians, in the *hôtel* of that noble, lovely and suffering princess, who so beautifully represents her physical and her spiritual fatherland, Italy and heaven. . . (Surely you must have seen her in Paris, that ideal figure, which yet is no more than a prison wherein the holiest of angel souls has been incarcerated! . . . This prison, however, is so beautiful that everyone stands and admires it as though bound by a spell.) . . . It was at this concert for the benefit of the unfortunate Italians at which I heard Liszt play for the last time during the past winter. I no longer recall what it was, but I should like to swear that he varied some themes from the Apocalypse. At first I could not make them out quite plainly, the four apocalyptic beasts, I only heard their voices, especially the roaring of the lion and the screaming of the eagle. The ox with the book in his hand I saw quite clearly. Best of all did he play the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There were barriers as in a tournament, and the risen nations, crowded about the enormous enclosure as spectators, pale with the pallor of the grave and trembling. First Satan galloped into the lists, in black armor on a milk-white steed. Death rode slowly behind him on a livid horse. Finally Christ appeared, in golden armor, on a black charger, and with His holy lance first unhorsed Satan and then Death, and the spectators exulted . . . Stormy applause did homage to the playing of the excellent Liszt, who wearily left the piano, bowed to the ladies. . . . About the lips of the loveliest came that sweetly melancholic smile, which recalls Italy and allows heaven to be divined.

The concert just mentioned had an additional and special interest for the audience. The newspapers will have told you enough regarding the sad misunderstanding existing between Liszt and the Viennese pianist Thalberg; what a noise an article by Liszt against Thalberg has made in the musical world; and the part played by lurking enmity and gossip to the disadvantage of both critic and criticized. In the very blossom-time of these scandalous ructions both heroes of the day

decided to play at the same concert, one after the other. Both set aside their wounded personal feelings in order to further a beneficent purpose, and the public, offered an opportunity of recognizing and doing justice to their individual differences by momentary comparison, richly rewarded them with deserved applause.

Yes, it is only necessary to compare the musical character of both in order to convince one's self that it as is much a sign of malice as of narrowmindedness to praise one at the other's expense. In their technical development they are probably equals, and as regards their spiritual character, no sharper contrast could be imagined than the noble, soulful, intelligent, comfortable, quiet German, nay Austrian, Thalberg, and the wild, sheet-lightning, volcanic, heaven-storming Liszt.

Comparison between virtuosos is based on an error which once flourished in poesy as well, namely in the so-called principle of difficulties overcome. Yet as it has since been discovered that metrical form serves quite another purpose than that of testifying to the verbal artifice of the poet, and that we do not admire a beautiful stanza because its composition was very laborious, so it will be seen, before long, that it suffices if a musician can impart all that he thinks and feels or what others have thought and felt, through the medium of his instrument, and that all virtuoso *tours de force*, which testify only to difficulties overcome, must be discarded as profitless sound, and must be relegated to the domain of parlor magic . . . of fencing, sword-swallowing, tight-rope-walking and egg-dancing. It is sufficient if the musician control his instrument absolutely, so that the material intermediary is totally forgotten, and only the spirit is audible. After all, since Kalkbrenner has brought the art of piano-playing to its highest perfection, pianists need not pride themselves greatly upon their technical facility. Presumption and malice alone might speak in pedantic utterance of a revolution which Thalberg has brought about on his instrument. This great and admirable artist had been done a disservice, when, instead of praising the youthful beauty, delicacy and loveliness of his playing, he has been represented as a Columbus who has discovered America on the piano keyboard, while others have hitherto had to play themselves painfully around the mountains of the Cape of Good Hope in order to refresh the public with musical spices. How Kalkbrenner would smile could he hear of this new discovery!

It would be unjust did I not take this opportunity to mention a pianist who, next to Liszt, is most fêted. It is Chopin.<sup>1</sup> He not only shines as a virtuoso, because of his technical perfection; but also achieves the highest as a composer. He is a man of the first rank. Chopin is a favorite of the *élite* which seeks the most elevated spiritual enjoyment in music. His fame is of the aristocratic kind, he is perfumed with the eulogies of good society, he is as distinguished as his own personality.

<sup>1</sup>In the earliest version of this letter this passage reads: "It is Chopin, and he may at the same time serve as an example of how the man who is above the ordinary will not be content merely to rival the best in his branch in technical perfection. Chopin is not satisfied to have his hands applauded by other hands because of their dexterity: he strives for higher laurels, his fingers are merely the servants of his soul, and the latter is applauded by those who hear, not alone with their ears, but with their souls as well. Hence he is the favorite of that *élite*, etc."—*Trans.*

Chopin was born in Poland, of French parents, and his education was in part gained in Germany. This influence of three nationalities causes his personality to be a most remarkable one; for he has appropriated for himself the best of all that distinguishes the three nations: Poland gave him her spirit of chivalry and her historic sorrow; France her facile charm, her grace; Germany romantic depth . . . And nature gave him a slender, gracious, somewhat delicate figure, a heart of the noblest, and genius. Yes, Chopin must be called a genius in the fullest meaning of the term; he is not alone a virtuoso, he is also a poet, and he can make us feel the poetry that dwells in his soul. He is a poet of tone, and nothing can equal the enjoyment he procures us when he sits at the piano and improvises. Then he is neither a Pole, nor a Frenchman nor a German, he betrays a far loftier origin, we then realize that he comes from the country of Mozart, of Raphael, of Goethe, that his true fatherland is the dreamland of poesy. When he sits at the piano and improvises I feel as though some countryman from my beloved homeland were visiting me, and telling me the strangest things which had happened there since my absence . . . At times I should like to interrupt him with questions: And how is the handsome watersprite, who knew how to wind her silver veil so coquettishly around her verdant locks? Does the white-bearded sea-god still pursue her with his stale, cooled-off love? Are the roses at home still as flamingly proud? Do the trees still sing as sweetly in the moonlight? . . .

### MUSICAL REPORTS FROM PARIS

(1840-1847)

#### SPONTINI AND MEYERBEER

Paris, June 12, 1840.

Sir Gasparo is at present bombarding the poor Parisians with lithographed letters, in order to recall his long-forgotten person to them at any cost. At this moment I have before me a circular which he is sending to all newspaper editors, and which none of them want to print, out of pious regard for plain common-sense and Spontini's former reputation. In it the ridiculous verges on the sublime. This painful weakness which speaks or, rather, rages in the most baroque fashion, is as interesting to the physician as to the philologist. The former will see in it the sad phenomenon of a vanity which flares up all the more furiously in the mind, the more the nobler mental powers are extinguished therein; the latter, however, the philologist, will observe how entertaining a jargon comes into being when a stiff-necked Italian, who had of necessity learned a little French in France, develops this so-called Italian-French during a twenty-five-year stay in Berlin, so that his ancient gibberish is most strangely spiced with Sarmatian barbarisms. This circular commences with the words: *C'est très probablement une bénévole supposition ou un souhait amical jeté à loisir dans le camp des novellistes de Paris, que l'annonce que je viens de lire dans la "Gazette d'Etat" et dans les "Débats" du 16. courant, que l'administration de l'Académie royale de musique a arrêté de remettre en scène la Vestale, ce dont aucuns désirs ni soucis ne m'ont un seul instant occupé après mon*



*dernier départ de Paris!* As though anyone in the *Staatszeitung* or in the *Débats* spoke of M. Spontini of their own volition, and as though he himself did not afflict the whole world with letters to recall his opera. The circular is dated February, but has recently been sent on here again because Signor Spontini heard that his celebrated work was once more to be performed here, which was nothing but a trap—a trap which he wishes to employ in order to be recalled to Paris. For, after declaiming pathetically against his enemies, he adds: *Et voilà justement le nouveau piège que je crois avoir deviné, et ce qui me fait un impérieux devoir de m'opposer, me trouvant absent, à la remise en scène de mes opéras sur le théâtre de la Académie royale de musique, à moins que je ne suis officiellement engagé moi-même par l'administration, sous la garantie du Ministère de l'Intérieur, à me rendre à Paris, pour aider de mes conseils créateurs les artistes (la tradition de mes opéras étant perdue), pour assister aux répétitions et contribuer au succès de la Vestale, puisque c'est d'elle qu'il s'agit.* This is about the only spot of firm ground in these Spontinian morasses; here craftiness stretches out its long ears. The man wishes above all to leave Berlin, where he can no longer endure since Meyerbeer's operas are given, and a year ago he came here for a few weeks and ran around to every person of influence in order to obtain a call to Paris. Since most people here thought he had died long ago, they were not a little frightened by his sudden spectral apparition. There was, in fact, something uncanny about the vengeful agility of these dead bones. M. Duponchel, the director of the Grand Opéra, would not see him at all, and cried with horror: "Let this intriguing mummy keep away from me; I have enough to suffer as it is from the intrigues of the living!" And yet Herr Moritz Schlesinger, the publisher of the Meyerbeer operas—for it was through the offices of this good honest soul that Spontini had announced his visit to M. Duponchel in advance—had exerted all his most convincing eloquence in order to set his recommendee in the best possible light. In the choice of the recommendatory intermediary M. Spontini showed all his shrewdness. He also displayed it on other occasions; for instance, when he was abusing someone, he usually did so to that person's most intimate friends. He informed the French writers that in Berlin he had had a German scribe, who had written against him, imprisoned. To French singers he complained about the German singers, who would not engage themselves to the Berlin Opera unless their contracts guaranteed that they should not have to sing in any Spontini opera.

But he wants to come here by all means; he can no longer stand it in Berlin, where, so he declares, he was exiled in the first place through the hatred of his enemies and where, nevertheless, he is not left in peace. During the past few days he has written to the editor of *France musicale*: that his enemies are not satisfied with having driven him across the Rhine, the Weser and the Elbe; they would like to drive him still further across the Vistula, the Niemen. He discovers a great resemblance between his fate and that of Napoleon. He regards himself as a genius against whom all the musical powers have formed a conspiracy. Berlin is his St. Helena, and Rellstab his Sir Hudson Lowe. But now his remains must be permitted to come back to Paris, and he solemnly deposited in the *Invalides* of the tonal art, the *Académie royale de musique*.

The Alpha and Omega of all the Spontini Jeremiads is Meyerbeer. When Sir Gasparo honored me with a visit here in Paris, he was inextinguishable in stories bloated with bile and poison. He cannot deny the fact that the King of Prussia overwhelms our great Giacomo with honors, and thinks of entrusting him with high offices and dignities; but his invention ascribes the most despicable motives to this royal favor. In the end he comes to believe his own inventions, and he assured me with a mien of the deepest conviction that once, when he had dined with His Majesty the King, the All-Highest had admitted to him after the meal, with jovial, open-hearted frankness, that he wished to chain Meyerbeer to Berlin at any cost, so that this millionaire would not disburse his fortune in foreign parts. And since music, and the urge to shine as an operatic composer, was a well-known foible of this wealthy man, he, the king, was endeavoring to take advantage of his weak side, in order to bait him with honorific distinctions. "It is sad," the king is supposed to have added, "that an indigenous talent, who possesses such a large, almost genial fortune, should spend his good hard Prussian thalers in Italy and Paris, in order to be celebrated as a composer—for all that may be had for money is to be had here at home in Berlin. In our hot-houses we also grow laurels for the fools who are willing to pay for them; our journalists are also witty and fond of a good breakfast or dinner; our corner loafers and pickle-dealers have just as heavy hands when it comes to applauding as the Paris claque—yes, if our idlers were to spend their evenings in the Opera House, applauding 'Les Huguenots,' instead of in the tobacco-club, their education would profit thereby—the lower classes must be elevated morally and aesthetically—and the main thing is that the money gets into circulation, especially in the capital." In such wise, Spontini assured me, had His Majesty expressed himself, as though to excuse himself for being obliged to sacrifice him, the composer of "La Vestale," to Meyerbeer. When I remarked that at bottom it was most praiseworthy of a prince to advance the prosperity of his capital, Spontini interrupted me: "Ah, you are mistaken in believing that the King of Prussia protects poor music for reasons of state economy! He does so, rather, because he hates the art of tone, and is well aware that it must perish through the example and direction of a man, who, without any feeling for truth and nobility, merely tries to flatter the uncouth mob!"

I could not refrain from openly admitting to the malevolent Italian that it was not wise on his part to deny all merit to his rival. "Rival!" cried the furious man, and changed color some ten times, until the yellow at last gained the upper hand—but then collecting himself, he asked as he scornfully gnashed his teeth: "Are you quite sure that Meyerbeer really is the composer of the music which is performed under his name?" I was not a little taken aback by this madhouse question, and heard with astonishment that Meyerbeer had bought up the compositions of some poor musicians in Italy and made operas of them; but that they had fallen through because the stuff which had been furnished him was all too wretched. Later he had bought something better from a talented *abbate* in Venice, which he had embodied in "Il Crociato." He was also in possession of Weber's posthumous manuscripts, which he had talked the latter's widow into giving him, and on

which he would undoubtedly draw later. "Robert le diable" and "Les Huguenots" were in the main the productions of a Frenchman named Gouin, who was very glad to produce his operas under Meyerbeer's name, in order not to lose his position as a *Chef de Bureau* in the post-office, since his superiors would be sure to question his administrative zeal did they know he was really a dreamy composer. The Philistines regard practical functions as incompatible with artistic endowment, and the postal employee Gouin is wise enough to hold his tongue about his authorship, and leave all the world-wide fame to his ambitious friend Meyerbeer. Hence the intimate relations existing between the two men, whose interests so intimately complete each other. But once a father always a father, and friend Gouin takes the fate of his children continually to heart; the details of the production and the success of "Robert le diable" and "Les Huguenots" preëempt his entire activity; he attends every rehearsal, he is continually negotiating with the director of the opera, with the singers, the dancers, the chief of the claque, the journalists; he runs from morning till evening to all the newspaper offices in his strapless, oily boots, in order to place some advertisement in favor of Meyerbeer's operas, and his untiring indefatigability is said to astonish everyone.

When Spontini communicated this hypothesis to me I admitted that it was not entirely devoid of probability, and that, although the four-square outward appearance, the brick-red face, the abbreviated forehead and the smeary black hair of the aforesaid M. Gouin suggested an ox-breeder or a cattle-raiser rather than a tonal artist, yet there was much in his actions which might raise the suspicion that he was the author of the Meyerbeer operas. It chanced, at times, that he spoke of "Robert le diable" and "Les Huguenots" as "our" operas. Such remarks escaped him as: "We have a rehearsal to-day . . ." "We must make a cut in that aria." It is strange, as well, that Mr. Gouin is never absent at any performance of these operas, and that when a bravura aria is applauded he forgets himself entirely, and bows to all sides, as though he were thanking the public. I admitted all this to the exasperated Italian, but still, I added, despite the fact that I had seen such things with my own eyes, I did not consider M. Gouin the composer of the Meyerbeer operas; I cannot believe that M. Gouin wrote "Robert le diable" and "Les Huguenots"; yet if such were the case, then the artist's vanity would gain the upper hand in the end, and M. Gouin will publicly vindicate his claim to the authorship of these operas.

"No," replied the Italian with a sinister glance, as piercing as a bare stiletto, "this Gouin knows his Meyerbeer too well, not to know the resources his terrible friend commands to do away with anyone who is dangerous to him. He would be capable of having poor Gouin imprisoned forever in Charenton, under the pretext that he had become insane. He would pay the fees demanded for the mentally disordered of the first class, and would visit Charenton twice a week in order to convince himself that his poor friend was properly watched; he would tip the guards liberally in order that they might take the best care of his friend, his maniac Orestes, while he played the part of Pylades, to the great edification of all boobies, who would extol his generosity. Poor

Gouin, when he spoke of his beautiful choruses in 'Robert le diable,' they would put him in a strait-jacket, and if he alluded to his wonderful duet in 'Les Huguenots,' they would give him the cold-water cure! And the poor devil might even be glad to have escaped with his life. All who stand as an obstacle in the way of that ambitious man must yield. Where is Weber? Where is Bellini? Hm! Hm!"

This "Hm! Hm!" despite all its malice, was yet so droll that I could not help laughing as I remarked: "But you yourself, maestro, you have not yet been cleared out of the way, nor has Donizetti, nor Mendelssohn, nor Rossini, nor Halévy." "Hm! Hm! Halévy does not disturb his colleague, and the latter would even pay him to keep on existing as a harmless, ostensible rival; and as to Rossini, he knows through his spies that the latter no longer composes a single measure—besides, Rossini's stomach has already suffered enough, and he will not touch a piano for fear of exciting Meyerbeer's suspicion. Hm! Hm! But thank God, our bodies alone can be killed, not the works of our genius; they will continue to bloom in immortal freshness, while with the death of this Cartouche of music, his immortality will come to an end and his operas will follow him into the silent realm of oblivion!"

It was not without difficulty that I controlled my indignation when I heard with what impudent depreciation the invidious southerner spoke of the highly famed master who is the pride of Germany and the delight of the Occident, and who certainly must be regarded and admired as the true creator of "Robert le diable" and "Les Huguenots." No, such magnificent works were not written by any Gouin! With all my admiration for his exalted genius, it is true that at times notable doubts arise in my mind with regard to the immortality of these master-works after the master's decease; but in my conversation with Spontini I nevertheless acted as though I were convinced that they would survive his death, and to anger the malicious Italian, I told him in confidence something which would let him see with what foresight Meyerbeer had cared for the welfare of the children of his mind beyond the grave. This forethought, said I, is a psychological proof that not M. Gouin, but the great Giacomo himself, is the real father. The fact is that the latter, in the will he has made in favor of these musical children of his genius, established a sort of entail in trust, inasmuch as he has left for each a capital sum whose interest is to be devoted to making the poor orphans' future secure, so that even after their father has departed this life, the necessary publicity expenses, the eventual outlay for decorations, claque, newspaper laudation, etc., will be covered. Even for the little "Prophète," as yet unborn, the affectionate author of its days is said to have set aside the sum of 150,000 Prussian thalers in cash. Truly, never yet has a prophet been born into this world with so large a fortune; the carpenter's son of Nazareth and the camel-driver of Mecca were not so opulent. "Robert le diable" and "Les Huguenots" are said to be less richly endowed; perhaps they will be able to live on their own fat for a time, as long as splendid decorations and voluptuous ballet-legs are provided; later they will need an increase. In the case of "Il Crociato" the legacy will probably not be so splendid a one; the father is in the right in pinching a little here, and he complains that the volatile fop once put him to far too great

expense in Italy—that he is a spendthrift. All the more generously does Meyerbeer remember his unfortunate daughter “Emma de Resburgo,” who fell flat; she is to be advertised every year in the press, and will appear in a new *de luxe* edition of satin-velvet; since it is for the deformed changeling that the loving hearts of parents beat most faithfully. In this manner all the Meyerbeerian children of genius have been well taken care of, and their future assured for all time.

Hatred blinds even the most intelligent, and it is no wonder that a passionate fool like Spontini did not entirely doubt what I had said: He cried: “Oh, he is capable of anything! Unhappy age! Unhappy world!”

I close herewith, since in any event I am in a very tragic mood to-day and dismal thoughts of death cast their shadow over my soul. To-day they buried my poor Sakoski, the celebrated artist in leather—for the term shoemaker is too ignoble for Sakoski. All the *marchands bottiers* and *Fabricants de chaussures* of Paris followed the body. He was eighty-eight years old and died of an indigestion. He lived wisely and happily. He paid little heed to the heads, but all the more to the feet, of his contemporaries. May the earth press you as lightly as your boots pressed me!

(To be continued)

## VIEWS AND REVIEWS

By CARL ENGEL

ONE hundred years ago—in May 1822, to be exact—"The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review," published in London and sold by Baldwin, Cradock and Joy in Paternoster-Row, contained in its XIVth number an article entitled "Sketch of the State of Music in London." These sketches of current musical life in London, and also in Paris, were regular features of the magazine. The one to which I am referring begins with general reflections on the difficulty of applying a measure to the proportions of art. In a style that would be learned and is but the afterglow of the classic period, the reviewer laments the fact that we are almost unconscious of artistic progress and that to watch it would be "of little more avail than the hourly inspection of the grass of the field." Perhaps the anonymous gentleman of The Quarterly Musical Magazine was merely looking for a suitable way of beginning his review and was not so fortunate as to find for that purpose an earlier culprit—preceding him, say, by fifty or seventy-five years—whom to expose in the pillory of censorious rebuke. For whatever purpose the assertion was made, in the light of the present state of music in the world, it would seem hopelessly, pathetically mistaken. If the reviewer, to-day, has any fault to find, it is certainly not with the slowness of musical progress. On the contrary, the problem he is facing is not one of watching tender blades of grass, raising shyly their points to heaven, but how to follow—if he cannot be ahead of it—the mad, careening course of a race. Therefore the attempt at supplying the "Musical Quarterly" with anything like an up-to-date department of "Views and Reviews" would seem sheer folly. And yet that is precisely the task which the distinguished editor of this magazine has assigned to me. Yes, this department of "Views and Reviews"—if it should prove at all practicable—is to form part of subsequent issues: some sidelights on musical happenings that will furnish the contemporary with easy rubrication, and posterity with helpful suggestions regarding our shortcomings. At least, the poor scribe of a hundred years hence who may be put to the same sort of straits, may thank me for giving him a chance conveniently to start his series of articles by



showing how badly I have gone about my job. The thought of that eventuality must cheer me in a moment of sincere misgivings.

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One hundred years ago, the English reviewer was calling attention to the unquestionable increase in the "notice and estimation which foreign compositions, foreign execution, and foreign professors" had attracted. Lo! here is one point on which we shake the phantom hand that penned those lines. The condition in which England was at the time is precisely that of our America. The scene has shifted, but the play is the same. "Foreign professors"—save the mark—are with us in goodly number. Tom Noddy has but to hang a *-witch* or a *-sky* to his name, or interject it with unpronounced aspirates and sibilants, and his fortune is made. The mania for the "foreign" element in art and in artists is perhaps the most remarkable trait of our era. Art is supposedly of no country, is international. And yet it would seem that every nation, every clan cultivates an artistic expression of its own, for the commercial advantages of the wholesale export trade. Here is contact with, and difference from, our elders. The musical export was monopolized first by Italy, reaching from London to the wildernesses of the Neva where a village of mud huts and wooden palaces was named St. Petersburg. Then it was Germany; now it is the whole world. The Swedish ballet danced in Paris, the Russian ballet in Madrid; American singers lately "invaded" England; and we, in America, have them all. And all sing, fiddle, strum and hop in praise of the almighty dollar and its purchasing power.

During the war-troubled years of a declining eighteenth century until long after the Napoleonic campaigns, the pound sterling ruled the money and the music markets. Haydn went twice to London, even as Richard Strauss went to New York. Mozart, the Wunderkind, played for His Britannic Majesty, and took back sovereigns to Salzburg. Beethoven, although he never crossed the channel, did not disdain English "commissions." On his deathbed, he turned to London for financial succor. London was the home of J. B. Cramer as much as it had been that of Handel. The latter was composer and opera impresario, the former pedagogue and publisher. Sébastien Erard went to London when the threatening French revolution disturbed his patient toil in Paris, even as Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg, founder of the Steinway firm, emigrated to New York after the German

riots of 1848. Clementi had an estate at Evesham, Padewski a ranch in California. The "strolling players" who passed through London in those years are legion. Angelica Catalani fled the gilded snares of Napoleon, to earn within one year at Covent Garden £16,700. Weber still beat time with a music roll. Louis Spohr, conducting the Philharmonic Orchestra in 1820, at the rehearsal pulled a bâton from his pocket, to the dismay of that estimable body. At night, old Viotti was in the audience. Incidentally, Baillot and Paganini got some of Albion's gold—which is but a reminder that there were violinists before Messrs. Auer and Sevcik went into the business of hatching swans and goslings. Wilhelmine Schroeder-Devrient introduced Schubert's songs in the salons of Grosvenor Square before, on the Continent, they had gone much beyond the city limits of Vienna. London alone could afford to have Henriette Sontag and Marie Malibran sing upon one stage in one evening. Stendhal, in the *Journal de Paris*, on Feb. 16, 1825, wrote enviously: "Mme. Pasta part pour Londres en avril." Weber breathed his last amid the Thames fog. Chopin was on his way to the English capital, when Lutetia retained him, and not until the end of his short life did he make that last sfage of the trip, when he was no longer fit for journeys in coach or packet. Mendelssohn triumphed at the court of St. James. Moscheles squatted in British society, where a Lord Saltoun played the guitar, a Duke of Leinster the double-bass and an Earl of Arundel the trumpet. These are mere outlines; to add the filling details would be tedious. The picture is clear enough to show the resemblance with present-day conditions in New York. Money not only talks, it sings and plays.



Riches and love of the beautiful are the loam that nourishes art. America has marl to spare. And the advantages of such abundance are obvious. What if we are overrun with "foreign professors," if the annual deluge of concerts brings down upon us much that is crude, mediocre or charlatanic—America has a fresher interest in musical matters, to-day, than any other country in the world. Nor do I mean by America the half-dozen centers of the East and West. The people who love whole-cloth music—not the ragged edge of it—are spread from ocean to ocean. And this statement is not made in an attempt to be patriotic at all cost; for one of patriotism's first duties is the

fearless pointing to flaw and error. I might support my claim in more ways than one, but shall be content to cite the tour of the Flonzaley Quartet, during the season 1921-22. These four men represent a rather high standard, and to read the list of towns in which they played, to houses better filled than in some of the large cities, is a revelation. Having no "school" of our own, as yet, we turn an open mind to all others.

In Paris, the Sunday concerts still cling to the bewhiskered classics and to a few mildly modern things of the French school, with a sprinkling of Russian. Chauvinism excludes everything else. Adherents of the various "chapelles" and sainted circles lead hermetic lives; a few resort to midway methods in selfish propaganda. When Pierre Monteux conducted the "London Symphony" by Vaughan Williams in Paris, last year, one of the best and supposedly most *averti* critics confessed to never having heard the composer's name before, and asked whether he was American or English. Jean-Aubry has done more than any one else to bring musical Frenchmen and Britons together. In Berlin, it is nothing unusual to find from eight to twelve concerts in one evening. But what modern music they offer, is generally of the home-made kind. With the restoration of peace, these things may change. Poor, suffering, glorious Vienna has at least Schoenberg's private musicales, and in the hour of her greatest hardships she is still the wonderful, music-mad, hospitable city that welcomes Ravel and Puccini. London is having a busy time giving each one of the youngest English school a chance. And they go about it in a businesslike fashion, not unmindful of what systematic advertising will do. But it takes America to have that vast concourse of musical talent from everywhere, to listen in one week to Casella, Strauss and Prokofieff. Many a composer has heard the ideal performance of his work, not in his native land, but here. Humperdinck, who has gone to dwell with the angels for whom he has written such nobly simple strains, was "Professor Pumpnickel" to the children in his "Königskinder." Granados found the last and greatest artistic joy of his life in that same Metropolitan Opera House. Ernest Bloch has reached a haven on these shores. That the critics in New York and Philadelphia writhed under his suite for viola and orchestra, is natural; that they derided it, beslimed it, did not surprise me. Béla Bartók is casting longing glances in our direction. Louis Aubert, who has been made the subject of a monograph by Louis Vuillemin, saw his "Forêt Bleue" first performed in Boston, his "mattresse-œuvre" as the enthusiastic biographer

thinks, which France still ignores. Granted, in this instance, France has not missed a great deal—for in matters of hospitality small blunders will occur. New York's "L'oiseau bleu" was bird of the same feather. But it is well to place on record the admission of the publishing interests of Durand in Paris, that England and especially America—and England and America only—have made it possible for that enterprising firm to support and publish the works of Debussy, Favel, Schmitt and a host of other modern Frenchmen. The quantity of their music actually sold in France cannot begin to compare with what is yearly exported to New York, to Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago. In a most certain manner has America assumed the patronage of music. Let us forget our crudities, let an ungrateful Europe snub us, we have done well if we can say that for us the presses at Nanterre are busy printing Debussy and Gabriel Fauré, and that the younger men find a kindly disposed publisher because "Au moins, ça se vendra en Amérique."

And what are American publishers doing?—publishing, publishing until the country is swamped with novelties, new editions, and the cry is loud that they are overproducing. There are two types of music publishers in America: first, the dairymen who conduct a legitimate business, have to look after hundreds of milch cows, and try to serve the public with clean and unadulterated nutriment—that the public at large does not take to cream, is a fault of the stomach; second, there are the proprietors of racing stables, with a string of fast blood, who stake a fortune on a filly and run it to death in making the post. Mix the two kinds of enterprises, as the case has been—send your cows to the track or your jockey to the cow barn, and the result is disaster. The get-rich-quick idea has demoralized American composers and music publishers. It has led people to compose who are not musicians, and people to publish who are nothing but tradesmen, and poor ones at that. For they expect to make a showing by peddling canned milk or running a merry-go-round. In Paris alone, there are more high-grade publishers of serious music, enjoying a world-wide reputation, than there are in all the States of the Union. And they sell their high-grade wares to America. What's wrong with the American publisher? Why must we have a "Society for the Publication of American Music"? What support does the publisher get who prints an American work for which he knows the sale cannot be immediate, or large at any time? Can he escape the temptation to publish "trash," if trash is what he has laboriously made the public believe it wants?

There is infinitely more musical value in some of our so-called "popular" music than in the cheap sob-stuff with chromo titles and the vile "teaching pieces" with which the musical sense of our children is being killed off. The music publishing industry needs "shrewd idealists" of the Belaief sort.

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In France you have, besides the Durands, the Heugels, three generations of music publishers grown rich through the many operas of Massenet and the one "Louise" of Charpentier. Henri Heugel, son of the founder and father of the present director, was a clever old man. Crowned with his little black scull cap on his high, bald head, he throned in carefully guarded seclusion, visible only to a favored few, tenacious, the perfect type of ancient immobility in business methods. His weekly paper, "Le Ménestrel," breathed the same spirit. And yet it is one of the best informed in matters of musical news and of Parisian theatres. It often brings an interesting "leader." A recent one was an appreciation of Berlioz by the late Saint-Saëns. We gain the impression that Berlioz was of yesteryear or that Saint-Saëns reached prodigious antiquity. The dean of French composers culls from his personal reminiscences; he knew Berlioz and speaks of him as of somebody in the flesh. It is not the Berlioz of legends, created mostly by Berlioz himself. Briefly but penetratingly Saint-Saëns analyzes the man and his work. We are reminded that Wagner assimilated, evolved, matured, while Berlioz sprang into being whole and full grown. At a time when a Symphony by Haydn, played by thirty musicians, was greeted with shouts: "What noise, *mon Dieu*, what noise!" Berlioz had the audacity to demand fifty violins, five hundred performers. Truly, a madman. He gave music the bent towards the gigantic, to which our present musical "bibelots" and atonal snatches are the answer. Berlioz asked young Saint-Saëns to make the piano reduction of "Lélio." No better man to do it; Saint-Saëns' score reading, *prima vista*, was astounding and so conceded even by Wagner. Besides this striving for cyclopean effect, there was the romantic admiration for brigands and highwaymen. Schiller's "Räuber" put a new tuck into literature. Byron set a fashion. Everybody loved a bad man, from the heroic Corsaire to the comic opera Fra Diavolo. Saint-Saëns tells us that Berlioz spoke lightly of Pergolesi's "Serva padrona," did not care for Handel, considered Bach a sort of "fort en thème"

until the day that Saint-Saëns showed him the poet in the contrapuntist, and explained to him the meaning of the title "The well-tempered clavichord." A rich life that, which reached back to the early years of romanticism and stood before the latest manifestations of futurism with the admission that music is venturesomely entering "dans des régions qui m'échappent." Often it is best for a composer that the man die young.<sup>1</sup> Thus only may he hope for some space of after-life. The public seemingly cannot forgive a man who survives himself. And not every one, like Verdi, grows younger with advancing age. Max Bruch actually died last year, long after the definite close of the Jaegerwoollen period in music.

Brigandage and the stage had fraternized before Berlioz's and Schiller's day. When "The Beggar's Opera" was first produced in 1728, it had a run of sixty-three nights and drew larger crowds than Handel's "Richard I" and "Admeto." It was viewed with greatest alarm. The Archbishop of Canterbury preached against it. Dean Swift defended it. Certainly, "the *vox populi* was in favor of this immoral drama." Some held that it exerted a deplorable influence. One of the most emphatic among them was Sir John Hawkins:

The effects of the Beggar's Opera on the minds of the people have fulfilled the prognostications of many that it would prove injurious to society. Rapine and violence have been gradually increasing ever since its first representation: the rights of property, and the obligation of the laws that guard it, are disputed upon principle.—Young men, apprentices, clerks in public offices, and others, disdaining the arts of honest industry, and captivated with the charms of idleness and criminal pleasure, now betake themselves to the road, affect politeness in the very act of robbery, and in the end become victims to the justice of their country; and men of discernment, who have been at the pains of tracing this evil to its source, have found that not a few of those, who, during these last fifty years have paid to the law the forfeit of their lives, have in the course of their pursuits been emulous to imitate the manners and general character of Macheath.

Now Macheath, as portrayed in the New York revival of "The Beggar's Opera," last year, was a very attractive rogue. And it so happened that the revival fell in with the most startling and spectacular succession of robberies and murders, thefts of jewels and securities, which necessitated the turning of the city into an armed camp. Perhaps we must thank the coolness of

<sup>1</sup>An "obituary" of the composer Saint-Saëns was written twenty-one years ago, after the performance of his opera "Les Barbares" in 1901, by no less distinguished a necrologist than Claude Debussy. The article has been included in the recently published collection of Debussy's criticisms and essays, "Monsieur Croche, Antidilettante."



New York theatre-goers towards this delightfully ancient and fresh little play, if it was stopped in time, before the rascality outgrew all bounds. In England, the revival at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith reached its 600th performance on Nov. 14, 1921! The play inaugurated the musical season 1921-22 at Manchester, with Mr. Eugene Goossens conducting the orchestra. And yet, we have heard of no crime-wave in England subsequent to these performances. It remains a pity that the charming production at the "Greenwich Village Theatre" had to close prematurely for lack of a public educated enough to enjoy it.

Mr. Frederick Austin, who prepared the musical part of the revival, is said to be writing, or has perhaps completed, a "Tramp's Opera." The possibilities are many, if we continue along those lines. How will New York take to the tramp, scorning the beggar? Ask no prognostication in matters where the dear public is concerned. If New York audiences present their problem, Louis Laloy seems to have some definite ideas on those of Paris. Hear and compare. M. Laloy needs no introduction; he is an astute critic, a fine scholar; friend of Debussy, he wrote a sympathetic, though perhaps not a definitive, biography during the master's lifetime. His book on "La Musique Chinoise" is compact, readable and instructive. M. Laloy finds that Parisian audiences have much changed since 1914, and especially since 1918. The public of to-day has learned little, and has much forgotten. Yet it is full of good intentions, and therefore the responsibility of those providing it with entertainment is doubly grave. Theirs is the power to purify taste, or fully to corrupt it. (Alas! we have heard this before, and might quote Faust on Easter Morning.) Before the war, already, Parisian audiences were largely composed of foreigners and "nouveaux riches." At the play, one third of the spectators barely understood French at all, another third had but vague notions of grammar or history. The rest—*notre élite intellectuelle*—has now broken away and frequents such places as the Vieux-Colombier, the Comédie-Montaigne, the Théâtre des Arts, in short, the little theatres, seating not more than three hundred, where the youngest, the most advanced, like Messrs. Jean Sarmant and Cromelynck, find favor. Large musical productions, of course, are not feasible within so limited a frame. And yet they were not more than three hundred, those who acclaimed Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande" at its first performance, and slowly communicated their enthusiasm to vaster numbers. M. Laloy is of the

opinion that if this opera had been brought out in 1919 or 1920, the group of intelligent listeners would not have exceeded two hundred, with the rest of the hall full of dreary boobs (*mornes badauds*). Before the war, Parisian audiences were sceptic, ironic, suspicious, restive, but capable also of vehement passion and ardor if they but listened to their hearts. M. de Diaghilev, who has wandered with his Russian dancers the length and breadth of every clime, did not conceal his preference for that public, though it had mercilessly howled down "Le Sacre du Printemps," while it burned for "Le Rossignol," waxed passionate over "Boris Godounof," and could not see enough of "Petroushka" and "Sheherazade." M. Laloy tells of having been asked to see a new ballet, not long ago, at a gala performance; a male dancer, attired in a pair of bathing pants, slowly gyrated and wriggled in the midst of a polychrome setting. The orchestra consisted chiefly of tam-tams, automobile sirens and klaxons, lashed into resonant fury. The pre-war public would have yelled. Instead, there was polite applause—*du bout des doigts*—as if it had been "Sylvia" with Mlle. Zambelli in her "tutu." The next evening the press was bidden; indignant protests followed, frenetic bravos, insults, almost fisticuffs. But the subsequent performances went off again under shameful indifference and unpardonably good behavior. In the same hall, only a short time before, Tristan, sung by an Italian troupe, had been vociferously approved; next came a Dutch company of singers, infinitely superior to the Italians, but dismissed with barely a mark of attention. Public curiosity was glutted. What aroused it again from its lethargy was an orchestra of negroes, which filled the theatre seven afternoons and nights to the last row in the topmost gallery—a band of frenzied jazzers. And M. Laloy's verdict? . . . "*orchestre nègre, public plus nègre encore!*"

These observations should strike home. Have we, in New York, always a public that is educated enough to be discriminating, and of sufficiently independent mind to stand by its likes or prejudices? Mr. Wiseman and Mrs. Knowitall give the signal, an anxiously careful clique takes it up; but politeness first and always, no demonstrations—they belong to the Latin temperament. The press may gibe, or kill with silence; around tea tables may form hostile "camps," and artistic destinies may be shaped between soup and fish. The seats to "Ladies' Night" were sold weeks ahead and traveling salesmen from Keokuk had to make their reservations early. "The Beggar's Opera" went begging. In concert or at the opera, stars will fill the house, music will

not, unless it be a Wagner program or Tschaikowsky's *Pathétique*. But let the word go round, that it is a Scythian dancer in bathing pants, and that said dancer in said pants represents the latest in newly discovered "æsthetic values," then you may be sure of seven afternoons and evenings "full house," with the same politely approbative audience, *plus nègre encore*—on Broadway as in the Champs Elysées.



Two monuments, commemorating the genius of Beethoven, owe their completion to the generous impulse of musicians. The first is Beethoven's statue at Bonn. In December 1835, a committee sent out an appeal for funds. Collections were slow. Schumann expressed under four different pseudonyms divergent views on the question of a fitting monument. It was Franz Liszt who provided, with public appearances, the necessary money which made possible the unveiling, in August 1845. The other monument is *Beethoven's Life* by Alexander Wheelock Thayer. It is the more significant, the more imposing one of the two. It has now, for the first time, been issued in the author's own language, "edited, revised and amended from the English manuscript and German editions of Hermann Deiters and Hugo Riemann, concluded, and all the documents newly translated by Henry Edward Krehbiel." The vicissitudes of Thayer's life-work were many and strange ones. They have been interestingly recounted in Mr. Krehbiel's Introduction. Unfinished, when the pen dropped from Thayer's hand, the collating of the vast material, garnered by long and patient research, was carried on by Thayer's German collaborator, Dr. Deiters. He died as the proof sheets of the fourth volume began to reach him. Dr. Hugo Riemann then was entrusted with completing the revision and supervising the publication of the last volumes. The road seemed clear now for Mr. Krehbiel to perform his arduous task, having been asked by Mr. Thayer's niece and heir, Mrs. Jabez Fox of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to prepare an English edition. But the road was neither clear nor short. Aside from the enormous labors that fell to the American editor—labors which his wonderful energy, his ever-green enthusiasm alone could accomplish—circumstances beyond the control of Mr. Krehbiel placed obstacle after obstacle in the way of final publication. Here intervened once more the generosity, the noble

"*geste*" of Beethoven's admirers and interpreters. Mr. Krehbiel says in the short Postscript to his Introduction:

In the Spring of 1920 the Beethoven Association, composed of musicians of high rank, who had given a remarkably successful series of concerts of Beethoven's chamber-music in New York in the season 1919-20, at the suggestion of O. G. Sonneck and Harold Bauer resolved to devote the proceeds of the concerts to promoting the publication of Thayer's biography. To this act of artistic philanthropy the appearance of the work is due.<sup>1</sup>

When the second volume was originally published, the Edinburgh Review, in 1873, had this to say:

It is impossible to wish for a more complete and trustworthy analysis of the first thirty-five years of his life than that which Mr. Thayer has given. But it is strangely wanting in literary merit. No one who wishes to know what is known about Beethoven can disregard so important a work, or can fail to be thankful to Mr. Thayer for the loving labour expended on it. But to read the book is a labour and a weariness; and we long for the advent of the biographer, whether German or English, who will make the dry bones live and conjure them into the true likeness of so great a man.

This critic had the German translation before him. It was perhaps unfair to judge the original text by that. Now Thayer's book comes to us largely, if not wholly, in the author's own words. It must be confessed that they do not in anything approach the verbal orchestration of Carlyle, the cadenced amplitude of Macaulay, or the rich imagery of Francis Thompson, if that is what the English reviewer meant. In matters of style, Thayer could have learned from his neighbor Burton in Trieste. We shall continue to want d'Indy's "Beethoven" near at hand, shall want to consult a German biography (not necessarily Schindler's, rather possibly that of Thomas-San-Galli or Bekker) if for no other reason than to read some of the documents and letters in the German of Beethoven himself. There are stretches in Thayer's book that seem like a stenographic court report. But that is in the nature of the thing. The case of Beethoven vs. The People was eminently one for judicial probing, for cross-examination of eye-witnesses, for exposing false testimony.

Thayer wanted to present the story of Beethoven the man, rather than the composer. Painstaking investigation, impartial weighing of the evidence collected, have produced a narrative which is among the most absorbing in all literature. The

<sup>1</sup>The Beethoven Association is represented in America for its edition of Thayer's "Life" by the printers of the three volumes, G. Schirmer, Inc., and in Great Britain by Novello & Co., Ltd.—Ed.

sequence of events is as unbroken as the scrupulous historian could make it; the picture of Beethoven's character as true to nature as deft and fearless blending of all traits could paint it. The composer of genius may stand revealed a mortal not devoid of moral flaws. There is consolation in the knowledge that Beethoven was as humanly fallible as the rest of us. The deplorable effects of his deafness may have warped his outlook on life, his estimation of friends and relatives. We may be asked to watch the progress of petty doubt gnawing at this big heart. Some of his acts, his sayings, may be explained only on pathologic grounds. But all the more gigantic does he loom before us, freed from the veils of myth and fabrication, in all his woe and tragic grandeur. And yet, not every riddle has been solved, not every question answered. Their remain problems, tantalizing to the hunter of details and dates. There have been recently and there will, undoubtedly, be further contributions to this life that ended less than a century ago. But little that may be brought to light can alter the structure of the monument that Thayer designed for Beethoven.

The last craftsman to work upon the edifice is Mr. Krehbiel. His share is vastly more than that of placing coping stones or adding final touches. Throughout the three volumes we encounter his observations, contained in helpful notes or piercing elucidations on some controversy. There may be room for criticism of the critical Mr. Krehbiel, when it comes to a closer examination of some of his translations from the German into English. The ideal edition of Beethoven's Life should have contained a fair sprinkling of samples in Beethoven's own German as well as in his strange French. Always authoritative in matters of fact, Mr. Krehbiel's collaboration gives these pages their crowning value; for it is in Thayer's spirit that the American editor has supplemented the American author.

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Mr. Henry Davey's "History of English Music" (J. Curwen & Sons, Ltd.) has been issued in a second edition, "revised and rewritten with appendix to 1921." The first edition appeared in 1895. Twenty-six years is a long time to pass before a reprint of so generally excellent a work was necessary or practicable. The war interfered. But even so, appreciation for this book does not seem to have been as widespread as might have been expected. Mr. Davey has compiled the valuable results of much

original research. Nothing seems omitted from John Dunstable to Tonic Sol-fa. That the author has, here and there, an axe of his own to grind, and does it with the sputtering of many a spark, is amusing rather than annoying. Mr. Davey is adducing a considerable amount of new material. Something of the spirit that animated his investigation may be seen in a remark anent *Royal MSS. Appendix 58*: "It is this MS. which enables us to claim for England the glory of having invented instrumental as well as vocal composition." Rule, Britannia! The preface to the second edition is priggish; the appendix woefully incomplete. England is richer to-day in musical talents than it has been in centuries. A mere enumeration of names tries to do justice to this renaissance. It would have been better, had Mr. Davey contented himself with carrying his account not farther than the year 1895 of his original edition. Such sentences as: "Lady composers have been active," followed by a list of female amateurs (Dr. Ethel Smyth for exception), add nothing to the usefulness of the volume. American readers should be pardoned a feeling of pride in finding mention of the MS. of sacred and secular music by Giles Farnaby, once in the possession of America's first native composer who was also a signatory of the Declaration of Independence; it is known as *The Hopkinson MS. at Philadelphia*. The undated printed copy of *Parthenia inviolata* for virginals and bass-viol must be consulted at the Public Library of New York. In speaking of Sir Henry Bishop, Mr. Davey writes: "The final account of Bishop's works was contributed by Mr. F. Corder to *The Musical Quarterly*, January, 1918."

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If it were discovered, to-day, that Richard Wagner in his lifetime had committed murder and escaped punishment, it would be interesting to know, but not necessarily a surprise. Certainly, it would not diminish the musician's achievement. Wagner remains a great genius, in spite of the fact that he was amoral and held to a code of his own. He was selfish and petty. Had these traits required to be put into the strongest possible light, "The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence," gathered in book form by Nietzsche's sister, Frau Elisabeth Foerster, would have sufficed to do so.<sup>1</sup> The reading of this book is not unbroken joy. Wagner's

<sup>1</sup>Some very interesting excerpts from that book, then in preparation by the translator, Miss Kerr, were published in the *Musical Quarterly* in July, 1918, pp. 466-489, under the title of "Wagner and Nietzsche—The Beginning and End of their Friendship." The book is published by Boni & Liveright, New York—Ed.



gigantic figure dwindles in the progress; the bold image of Nietzsche gains in size. These letters, together with Frau Foerster's connecting narrative, have now been published in English (translated by Caroline V. Kerr). For *hors d'œuvre*, Mr. H. L. Mencken, the brilliant writer, has obliged the American publishers with a short Introduction. It is mildly salted nuts. Try as you will, these letters offer problems which lie so deep beneath the surface, that superficial explanations fail. At the beginning of the correspondence, Wagner, the former political exile, had become a social outcast. During the last night of Nietzsche's first week-end visit to Villa Tribschen, the wife of Hans von Bülow gave birth to Wagner's son, Siegfried. The tension in the household was high. Cosima had sought distraction for the master. Even genius occasionally finds a Sunday boresome. And moreover, it was particularly desirable to draw to Tribschen so estimable a personage as a University Professor from Basle, young though he was. Nietzsche eagerly grasped the opportunity to come into more intimate contact with the older man, the greatest living composer of his age. The discussions they had were at first, no doubt, stimulant and elevation to both. But Wagner could not make the acquaintance of anyone without turning him into the serving Kundry of the hour. So Nietzsche soon became the "commissioner," in town, for the ostracised family. There were toys to buy for Cosima's children; Wagner's autobiography had to be given to a printer, with no small amount of secrecy and caution. Rich days of intensely happy converse repaid the errands. In the greetings addressed to Wagner on his birthday, in 1870, Nietzsche wrote: ". . . I offer you the rarest of all wishes—may everything remain as it is, may the moment abide, for, ah! it is so beautiful!" Did the younger, the more sensitive of the two, so early anticipate in vague concern the end that was inevitable? If so—and it is more than likely that the answer should be affirmative—it must be counted all the more to Nietzsche's credit that he continued servant to the man, and prophet to the master. Nietzsche was anxious to read Wagner his dissertation on the Greek Drama, and "was deeply wounded by perceiving that Wagner expected this work, in some way, to be a glorification of his own art." Thus did the sister see it. "But again, consideration for his friend won the day and no sooner had he returned to Basle than he set about rewriting the book." Not even a Nietzsche could evade the spell of Tribschen. When mere words had lost their power, a walk in "dreamy silence," along the lovely lake, would take their place. "Cosima was

wearing a semi-negligée of rose-colored cashmere, with broad revers of real lace falling to the hem of the garment, and upon her arm hung a large flower-trimmed hat of Florentine straw. Wagner was in his habitual costume worn by the Netherlands painters, black satin knee trousers, black velvet jacket, black silk stockings and a light blue satin cravat falling over a shirt of fine linen and real lace. The familiar velvet barret was posed upon his luxuriant brown hair." The picture is one to remember. When the changes in Nietzsche's work were made, not without inner struggle, and he humbly offered the revised version to Wagner, the latter acknowledged the receipt with a brief note in which we read, after a few expressions of empty praise: "I have just said to Cosima that you stand second only to her; then, for a long time, there is no one until we reach Lenbach, who has painted such a striking portrait of me." . . . of ME! yes, in the velvet jacket and barret,—great Gods!—why not with the satin breeches and the Dresden brogue! No wonder Nietzsche's spirits gradually drooped. When later, in a letter to Cosima, he dared allude to his disenchantment, Wagner, from Bayreuth, upbraided him in angry tone: "I must let you know what we have been saying about you; one thing was that never in my entire life did I have such opportunities for masculine companionship as you seem to have in Basle; but if you are all determined to be hypochondriacs, then this intercourse will be of no value to you. There seems to be a lack of young women, but as my old friend Sulzer used to say, 'Where can we get them unless we steal them?' I should say that in a case of extreme necessity one would be justified in stealing. Of one thing I am firmly convinced, and that is that you must either get married or write an opera. One would do you just about as much good—or harm!—as the other. But of the two, I advise you to marry." Knowing the lives of Wagner and of Nietzsche as we do, what comment shall we make to this? Poor Nietzsche had no "old friend Sulzer" to advise him, and doubts had probably begun to arise in his breast about some of Wagner's own advice and maxims. The ultimate break is more strongly foreshadowed as the final pages of the book are reached, although Frau Foerster has tactfully excluded from it "all the ugly and hostile words written and said" after the silent breach of friendship. Nietzsche, the clearer thinker still, the finer poet always, was the more sharply wounded of the two, wounded somehow past all the power of healing. "I shuddered as I went on my way alone; I was ill, or rather more than ill . . . weary of the bitterness and harrowing suspicion that, from now on, I was

doomed to distrust more deeply, to despise more deeply, and to be more deeply alone than ever before. For I had never had any one but Richard Wagner!" Leaving behind him the "human, all-too-human" Wagner, he mounted onward, mounted in loneliness to heights where, godlike, he created himself a companion after his own image—Superman.



